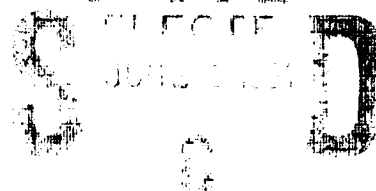


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**U.S. and KOREA in Vietnam
and the
Japan-Korea Treaty**

**Search for
Security, Prosperity and
Influence**

An Expanded Seminar Paper presented

by

Jiyul Kim
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to

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GVN - Government of Vietnam (South)
Hansen - Hansen Seinen Iinikai (Antiwar Youth Committee)
IMAF - International Military Assistance Force
IMF - International Monetary Fund
JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff
JMAG-K - Joint Military Assistance Group, Korea
JSP - Japan Socialist Party
KCIA - Korean Central Intelligence Agency
LDP - Liberal Democratic Party
LSM - Landing Ship, Medium
LST - Landing Ship, Tank
LTBT - Limited Test Ban Treaty
MAAG - Military Assistance and Advisory Group
MACV - Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MAP - Military Assistance Program
MASH - Mobile Army Surgical Hospital
MITI - Ministry of International Trade and Industry
MLF - Multilateral Force
MP - Mass Party
NA - National Assembly
NCO - Non-Commissioned Officer
NSC - National Security Council
OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PACOM - Pacific Command

PL - Program Loan
POL - Petroleum, Oil and Lubricant
ROK - Republic of Korea
ROKA - ROK Army
ROKG - ROK Government
ROC - Republic of China (Taiwan)
RVN - Republic of Vietnam
RVNAF - RVN Armed Forces
SA - Supporting Assistance (aid)
SCNR - Supreme Council for National Reconstruction
SEATO - Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
SECDEF - Secretary of Defense
SECST - Secretary of State
SOFA - Status of Forces Agreement
TO & E - Table of Organization and Equipment
VC - Viet Cong

Introduction

With the signing of the Paris Peace Accords in January of 1973, the long and agonizing American involvement in Vietnam came to a close. It also marked the end of South Korea's first foreign military venture, as nearly 40,000 troops were brought home within the next sixty days. On March 23, 1973, the last of the Korean troops returned, carrying with them the pains and memories of 5,000 comrades killed in combat during Korea's nearly ten years of direct involvement in the war.¹ At the height of its involvement in 1969, the Republic of Korea (ROK) had over 50,000 troops and 15,000 civilian laborers and technicians deployed in the Republic of Vietnam.² As estimated by the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, taking into consideration the annual rotation policy, 308,000 troops and 100,000 civilians had seen service in Vietnam by March 1973.³ The troops had been deployed in five increments starting in September 1964 with major combat troop deployments in late 1965 and late 1966.⁴ The story behind their deployments can be found by examining the political and military exigencies of the war from the American perspective, Korea's own political and economic factors and ambitions, and the development of U.S.-ROK relations and U.S. policies since the May 1961 coup in Korea.

Footnotes for this section begins on page 19.

The Vietnam War also had a significant impact on U.S.-Japan relations in the 1960's. The factors pertinent to this development were the evolving bilateral economic relationship and the U.S. design for Japan as the power center of communist containment in Asia, which was highlighted by forceful U.S. efforts to normalize relations between Japan and Korea. This period also marked the emergence of Japan as a true economic superpower. Japan's top two priorities at this time were continued economic growth and prosperity and the restoration of Okinawa and the Ryukyus Islands to Japanese sovereignty.

Many liberal critics of the Vietnam War have characterized the Korean soldiers as "mercenaries," "hired guns," and "rented troops."⁵ As radical as these labels are, they are actually quite close to the truth in simple economic terms, because the economic gains by many of the individual Korean participants, and to the nation as a whole were clearly large. However, characterizing Korea's involvement in Vietnam in purely economic terms ignores the significant military and political factors involved. The priorities for General Park Chung Hee after the May 1961 coup shifted from an initial search for political legitimacy to a guarantee of Korean security, accompanied by a quest for economic prosperity and regional political influence. As a leverage against the U.S. and domestic opposition in Korea, the Vietnam War gave Park the means to achieve these objectives.

The year 1965 was an epochal year for many reasons. In a series of decisions between April and July of 1965, President Johnson made the fateful decisions to commit the might, resolve, and reputation of the United States to the survival of South Vietnam. This decision set in motion the compelling drama of the U.S. troop escalation in Vietnam, which eventually reached over one-half million men and women in 1967 with deliberations for another 200,000 in 1968. This Vietnam policy had its most telling impact on American domestic affairs, but that was to come later, particularly after the Tet Offensive in early 1968. Johnson's escalatory decisions had an immediate impact on U.S. foreign policy, especially toward Korea and somewhat less so towards Japan.

The breakthrough in the seemingly interminable and controversial struggle for a Japan-Korea normalization treaty also occurred in 1965 and the treaty was initialled on June 22. The ratification processes in both Japan and Korea were wracked by violent demonstrations. But already, Korea had been drawn into Vietnam and became an integral part of President Johnson's efforts to internationalize the war: Korea had become an integral part of the military plans drawn up by the U.S. command for intervention in Vietnam. The seeming coincidence of the ratification of the Japan-Korea normalization treaty by the Korean National Assembly, and the passing of bill of consent for the deployment of the first Korean combat division to

Vietnam in mid-August, it turns out, was not a coincidence at all.

Park, having become an elected civilian president in late 1963, had ostensibly gained legitimacy from the U.S., but he faced the two enormous challenges of insuring Korean security and sparking economic development and growth. The key to both was a successful relationship with the U.S. and Japan. Having matured within the Japanese colonial period, even serving as a junior officer in the Imperial Army, Park was a Japanophile. The Japanese model of economic development was both comfortable personally and seemed fitting for Korean development. In contrast to President Rhee (Syngman Rhee), who had hated the Japanese, Park's priority was the normalization of relationship with Japan. Although he had to maneuver skillfully, and at times, forcibly around the emotional domestic opposition to the treaty, the ratification was a personal triumph for Park and his vision for Korea.

If the treaty was his objective, the dispatch of combat troops in support of the U.S. policy in Vietnam was one of the key supportive means for achieving that objective. While doubts lingered in Washington as to Park's effectiveness and true motives, even deeper suspicion remained with the Korean people. Part of this distrust had to with domestic political legitimacy, which the 1963 elections did not fully satisfy, but by 1965, the treaty had become the focal point of suspicion and

opposition. Compounding the complexity of the situation was the decline in U.S. military and economic aid to Korea. As a result of a policy review conducted early in the Kennedy administration. U.S. objectives in Korea were changed to emphasize economic development. Kennedy's concept of the containment strategy that had been pursued since it was originally formulated in 1947 was called "Flexible Response." Its vision of countering communist threats at all levels and locations required a large increase in the defense budget.⁶ A fallout of this requirement was a reduction in the U.S. aid program world wide. The consequence of the Kennedy policy in Korea was an even greater reduction in military aid than economic aid. Deliberate considerations were made by the U.S. to reduce the Korean armed forces, overwhelmingly supported by U.S. aid, by as many as 100,000 men. This prospect naturally created tremendous anxieties among the Koreans and Park faced as they were with a hostile and well armed northern neighbor. Park was able to minimize the reduction in military aid in 1962 and 1963 by convincingly linking Korean military security and Korean political and economic stability in the minds of U.S. policy makers. But real reductions finally were implemented by 1964. One must remember, however, that 1964 marked an important transitional year in America's Vietnam policy that led to the troop escalations of 1965.

Park's interest in Vietnam began much earlier and can be traced in the documents to his meeting with Kennedy in November 1961 at which the two men discussed the deteriorating situation in Vietnam. After that meeting, Park dispatched his right-hand man, Kim Chong Pil, on a seminal fact finding mission to Vietnam. In early 1962, Averell Harriman received a direct offer to send troops to Vietnam when he visited the Korean Prime Minister. Because the Japan-Korea normalization treaty negotiations had not yet progressed far enough to use the troop issue as a leverage against domestic opposition, the motivation for the offer can only be explained by something else. One must keep in mind that Park remained an unknown and suspect figure in Washington at this time. He was still ruling with a junta and was under enormous U.S. pressure to hold an election and to restore civilian rule. Part of that pressure was generated with threats to cut off aid. Park faced a crisis of legitimacy and acceptance with the Kennedy administration. The only possible motive for the troop offer in early 1962 was to accelerate U.S. acceptance of his regime as legitimate even without civilian elections. However, this was not to be since Vietnam was not yet a critical issue for Washington. In 1961, the last thing that Kennedy was contemplating was escalating the war in Vietnam with combat troops.⁷ The Korean offer was not taken up, but it probably was not forgotten by Harriman, who later

played a prominent role in Johnson's efforts to obtain "More Flags" for Vietnam.

U.S. complicity in the fall of Diem in November 1963 morally bound the U.S. to assist Vietnam in finding a better political solution. But 1964 became the year of "revolving door" governments in Vietnam. The Tonkin Gulf resolution effectively gave Johnson unlimited powers of intervention, which he was restrained from using by the coming presidential elections. But when it became clear that the U.S. was escalating its position in Vietnam, Park saw and seized an unprecedented opportunity. If Korea could become a partner-in-arms with the U.S. in Vietnam, providing a significant proportion of the combat power, he could use this relationship as leverage to gain U.S. concessions to guarantee and even strengthen Korean security. These benefits would not end merely by improving Korean security, a prominent role in Vietnam could thrust Korea and Park into the limelight of regional politics. Along with such political opportunities would come economic opportunities. Korea, a nation that had a per capita income of only \$100 in 1965, undoubtedly could benefit from any war related business.⁸ An even greater plum could be had if Vietnam could be turned into a righteous national anti-communist crusade. By emphasizing idealism and ideology, and by framing the troop deployments as matters of national pride and honor in repayment for the Korean War "debt," Park could unify

the Korean populace behind him and parlay the resulting public support to accomplish other goals. This strategy had the potential to solidify public acceptance of his regime, but even more importantly, it could undermine opposition to the normalization treaty with Japan, because of the nature of the Korean opposition movement. Because Park faced a legitimacy crisis, opposition to Park and his government had to be uncompromising. Given that the treaty was the dominant opposition issue in 1965, the anti-government movement had no choice but to oppose the troop deployment as well. By marrying the legitimacy of troop deployments to Vietnam to the average Korean's sense of national dignity, pride, and honor, Park could separate his opposition from sources of popular support. Consequently, Koreans who supported the troop deployment, whether out of a realistic assessment of its concrete security, political, and economic benefits or through patriotism, wound up acquiescing to the normalization treaty. The deployment of Korean troops to Vietnam then, was a prerequisite to the treaty's ratification.

From Park's perspective of 1965, there was almost no risk in sending the troops to Vietnam. The possibility of a U.S. defeat was unthinkable at the time. When Johnson decided to escalate the war in June and July of 1965, U.S. policy toward the normalization treaty took a back seat to getting Korean troops for Vietnam. Conveniently, Park's own priorities changed

to dovetail with U.S. priorities for his own reasons, as already stated. The treaty issue, however, became so highly charged that it led to the mass resignation of the opposition members of the National Assembly, which, ironically, made it easier for Park to implement his policies. The troop bill was passed first by the "one party" Assembly on 13 August, followed by the treaty ratification on 14 August.

The deployment of a Korean division (actually two-thirds of an Army division and one Marine brigade) in October 1965 meant that over twenty percent of the U.S.-Allied combat power in Vietnam was Korean (nine out of forty-four battalions, of which one was Australian) even though in absolute numbers, the U.S. force was nearly nine times as large (184,300 to 21,000) due to the huge logistical command established in Vietnam.⁹

Japan's position toward the U.S. policy in Vietnam was equally tempered by domestic reasons. Prime Ministers Ikeda (1960-1964) and Sato (1964-1972) placed economic growth and prosperity at the top of their agendas. The key to Japan's export oriented growth, of course, was the United States. Under Ikeda, Vietnam had not been a major issue, but a number of trade disputes had arisen which continued into the Sato era. What was important to the U.S., however, was the American strategic vision of Japan's role in Asia and the central role to be played by a Japan-Korea bloc. Consequently, the U.S. brought extraordinary pressures to bear on Japan and Korea to

get the normalization talks moving. The pressure was especially on Japan to make concessions. The talks progressed and the U.S.-Japan bilateral trade relationship continued to thrive. The intent here is not to make a case for normalization of the relationship between Japan and Korea as the dominant causative factor for the growth of U.S.-Japan trade, but to point out that it was one of the matters in which Japan made concessions in order to guarantee the health of that trade relationship.

When Sato became the Prime Minister in November 1964, the U.S. was on the verge of implementing its escalatory policies in Vietnam. Sato continued to place primacy on Japan's economic relationship with the U.S., but he also made the restoration of Okinawa to Japan a political do-or-die issue. Consequently, when the American escalation in Vietnam began with the bombing campaigns of spring 1965 and caused a significant anti-war reaction in Japan, Sato professed support for the U.S. Vietnam policy. He also pushed on the normalization treaty partly out of his own personal conviction that the treaty was necessary and partly due to U.S. pressure. The key breakthrough came when Sato's Foreign Minister Shiina made a public apology for Japanese colonialism in Korea. The anti-treaty movement in Japan, initially fragmented, coalesced when Korea decided on the troop deployment. In contrast to the right wing opposition to the treaty in Korea, which emphasized the redomination of Korea by Japan, the left wing Japanese opposition stressed that

the treaty would maintain the division of Korea and result in a further division between the East and the West in international relations. Sato put off introducing the ratification bill to the Diet until the violent demonstrations in Korea, which led to martial law in Seoul, had died down. The bill was ratified in November and the instruments exchanged in December.

By the end of 1965, U.S. policy in Vietnam was going out of control. Troop reinforcements were formulated and approved to justify the initial decision in July to commit combat troops to gain victory in Vietnam. As casualties mounted, troop deployments gained a momentum of its own and, in the end, objectives were defined by the means. It was the beginning of a path on a downward spiral at the end of which lay American defeat and withdrawal. Secretary of Defense McNamara, in December 1965, estimated that 200,000 additional troops, on top of the 180,000-plus already in Vietnam, would be required for 1966, and that a further 200,000 would be necessary in 1967. Even then, he noted to the President, victory could not be guaranteed. Additional Korean troops, on the order of 25,000, were an integral part of the new U.S. military plan. The plan would require more than doubling their numbers in Vietnam. But, as in the earlier deployment, numbers alone do not convey the significance of the Korean force. The new force envisioned for Vietnam by the end of 1966 would contain seventy-nine U.S. battalions, two Australian battalions and twenty-one Korean

battalions. Thus, Koreans would comprise approximately twenty percent of the U.S.-Allied ground combat force, even though the total Allied to American troops manpower ratio would still be a ratio of about one to nine to the total U.S. force. The discrepancy between the combat force and total force ratio was due of course to the enormous logistical tail provided by the U.S. for all combat units, U.S. and Allied.

As early as when the deployment of the first Korean division was being discussed between Washington and Seoul in June 1965, Park signaled that he was willing to send a second division to Vietnam. When the U.S. opened the subject of a second division in late 1965, the Koreans were very willing, even eager to comply. However, the demands made by Korea for the deployment and the concessions made by the U.S. to those demands later would be severely criticized by American liberals as a contract to hire mercenaries for the war. That the commitments made in early 1966 by the U.S. in return for the second division were extremely "profitable" for Korea is unquestionable. But Korea's demands must be seen in perspective with the American concessions for the first division, which were oriented entirely toward strengthening and guaranteeing Korea's national security. Since these protective measures remained in effect for the duration of the Korean deployment to Vietnam, there was relatively little of a military nature that Korea could seek in return for the second division deployment

other than marginal increases in military aid and further statements to reaffirm the guarantees. The second divisional agreement should be seen as an extension of the first such agreement, in which Park saw his opportunity to make economic demands. The war never became the divisive social issue it became in the United States. There is even today an unspoken understanding that it helped the security and economic posture of the nation, and the families of the soldiers, who earned bonuses for their service. The legacy of the war in Vietnam is, in Korea, radically different from its impact on the U.S..

The security motive for the Korean deployment was given further emphasis when the U.S. requested a third division in late 1967. The records show that Park was reluctant to go along with this deployment, in contrast to his eagerness to agree to deploy the first two divisions. Part of the reason for his reluctance may have to do with the fact that there was not much more the U.S. could offer his country, but a more compelling reason was the increasingly aggressive posture shown by North Korea throughout 1967. Although records are lacking for the Korean Army, the following was reported by the U.S. forces in Korea:¹⁰

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Incidents</u>	<u>Casualties</u>
1964	unknown	none
1965	unknown	2 wounded
1966	unknown	6 killed 1 wounded

1967	274	16 killed 63 wounded
1968	378	11 killed 54 wounded

The increasing threat seemed real. To make matters worse, only one new Korean division had been raised to replace the two sent to Vietnam. The deployment of a third would undoubtedly impinge directly on national security. After months of negotiations, Johnson finally promised additional materiel and training assistance to increase the capability of the Army and the Police, and Park reluctantly agreed to send a "light division" to Vietnam. Park's and the Korean people's worst fears seemed close to realization when in January 1968, a North Korean assassination attempt was made on Park's life, and North Korea seized the USS Pueblo. The offer to deploy a third division was withdrawn. The threshold of adequate security unquestionably had been crossed.

Japanese Prime Minister Sato's policy of supporting the U.S. in Vietnam paid off in U.S. concessionary positions on several sticky economic and political issues. By 1968, he had secured the return of part of the Ryukyus chain and had a firm commitment for the return of Okinawa at the earliest possible date. The importance of Okinawa to the war effort made an immediate return untenable, but the U.S. was aware that it was a critical bilateral issue, because Japan had become important to the war effort as a logistical supply and transit point. For

that reason, it was essential that the Japanese government remain pro-U.S. on the war. because the mutual security treaty of 1960 had clearly stipulated that Japan had veto power over the use of Japanese bases to directly support a war. Historian Thomas Havens has suggested that Sato subtly used the anti-war movement in Japan, which never really threatened the rule of his Liberal Democratic Party, to gain U.S. concessions on trade and Okinawa by implying that the movement could topple his cabinet and bring in a more hostile government.

The failure of U.S. policy in Vietnam, apparent by 1968, eventually led to strains in U.S. relations with Japan and Korea. Nixon's Guam Doctrine in 1969, the withdrawal of troops from Korea in 1970, the demise of the Bretton Woods system in 1971, and the U.S.-China rapprochement in 1972 all contributed to more tumultuous U.S.-Japan-Korea relations. By the early 1970s, Japan was well on its way toward becoming the second largest economy in the world and was actively involved in assisting not only Korea but other Asian nations as well. Sato was able to pull off one last coup when Okinawa was returned in May 1972.

The benefits that Japan reaped from the war are conservatively estimated at over \$6 billion. By 1966, Korea had a new confidence in its capacity to play a role in regional politics and in the status of its security posture. Korea began to set a blistering pace in economic growth which placed it

among the ranks of the "economic miracles." Underlying it all were the still relatively unblemished U.S. security commitments toward the two countries. The "loss" of Vietnam perhaps strengthened those commitments.

Vietnam and the policy pursued by the U.S. in Vietnam played an essential role in the emergence of Korea as a regional political and economic power. They also enhanced Korean security, which allowed the country to focus more of its energies on economic and political initiatives. Japan also registered significant political and economic gains as a result of the war. The new relationship between Japan and Korea eventually led to the biggest trading relationship in Asia, with each becoming the second most important trading partner for the other (the U.S. being first for both).

If palpable gains can be observed for Japan and Korea as a result of Vietnam, can we say that they were at the expense of the U.S.? Regarding U.S. policy toward Japan and Korea, the answer is clearly "no." U.S. objectives had been achieved, although perhaps at a pace faster than was intended. The catalyst for these changes was the war. Japan became the bastion of the anti-communist bloc in Asia, a goal pursued by U.S. policy planners since the end of World War II. Korea became intimately entwined economically with Japan; the two countries together forming an indomitable foil to Soviet and Chinese influence in Northeast Asia. Economically and

militarily. Korea became self-sufficient, and this was the ultimate U.S. goal in Korea.

This study attempts to tell this story in detail from 1961 to early 1966. It is a story of success: for the pursuit of Korean security, prosperity and influence; Japanese prosperity; and ultimately American security policy in Northeast Asia. It is perhaps, one of the few "successful" consequences of the Vietnam tragedy.

The shortcomings of the study arise from the nature of available sources. The U.S. perspectives are covered in great detail, largely from primary archival material, much never used before. Readers may question the need for this coverage of the Vietnam decision making in Washington, but its inclusion is necessary to show both the evolution of U.S. policy and its closely related effects on Japan and Korea.

Some Korean primary sources have been used, but no Japanese primary sources were. The author's failure to use more of these sources reflect his own shortcomings as well as the difficulties of obtaining Japanese and Korean documents. Part of the gap caused by a lack of Japanese and Korean decision making documents is filled by U.S. material. U.S. participants in decision making or negotiation sessions with the Japanese or Koreans almost always filed a written account of the meetings. It is possible to glean from them some sense of what the decision considerations were for Japan and Korea.

I hope that this study will fill a gap in historical research in an inadequately examined period and provide a fresh perspective on the Vietnam War. A note of gratitude is due to the staff of the Kennedy and Johnson Presidential Libraries for their untiring assistance and efforts to open up relevant documents and providing leads. Appreciation is extended to Professors Wagner, Iriye, Eckert and Khong for their advice and suggestions. Also, a very deep note of thanks to Dorman Walker, a friend of long standing, who took time from his busy law practice to review the entire paper. Finally, a special note of intellectual debt to another friend, John Newman, a fellow soldier and also a scholar. Without formative early discussions during Sunday morning runs with John in 1988 and 1989, this paper may never have been finished.

¹ For a detailed breakdown of redeployment dates, see *Hanguk Yongam* [Korea Yearbook] 1966 (Seoul: Hanguk Yongam Pyonchamhoe, 20 March 1966), p. 219. On casualty figures, see, Kyung Suk, Park, *TTa I Han* [Korea (Vietnamese slang)] Seoul: Dongbang Munhwawon, 1987). Volume 11, p. 309. The number of the actual casualties sustained by the Korean forces in Vietnam is difficult to ascertain. The official figures as published in Won Yol, Chung, *Mekong Kang un Jung Un Handa* [The Mekong River Testifies] (Seoul: Bumsuh Chulpansa, 1973), p. 497, which has as its source the *Kukhoebo* (*National Assembly Reports*), shows the final casualty figures as 3,844 killed in action, 8,344 wounded in action and 3,738 non-combat casualties. *TTa I Han* is an eleven volume history of the Korean forces in Vietnam written by a retired general who was apparently given access to previously classified government documents. Because it is of a later date and seems to have a more authoritative source, I have chosen to accept Park's figures. In addition to 5,000 killed, Park lists 11,000 as the figure for wounded. My confidential and non-attributable conversations with Korean officers in 1982 who had served in Vietnam clearly revealed the confusion created by official secrecy concerning casualties. Personal estimates by these officers ranged from double to, in some cases, twenty times the official figures. A Korean diplomat in a recent (March, 1990) frank discussion suggested that the official figures probably left out any casualty which might even remotely be construed as of non-combat causes, therefor, casualties due to accidents, suicides, diseases, etc. were left out. The official figures do show 3,738 non-combat casualties; however, based on the reservations to report actual casualty statistics shown by Korean participants (some being of senior grades), the final figure could be far higher than the 15,926 total as announced by the Ministry of National Defense.

² The 50,000+ figure from *U.S. News & World Report*, 12 January 1970, p. 24. The 15,000 figure from Se Jin Kim, "South Korea's Involvement in Vietnam and Its Economic and Political Impact," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 10, No. 6 (June 1970), p. 519.

³ Stentzel, James, "Seoul's Second Bonanza," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 July 1973, p. 43.

⁴ See Larsen, Stanley Robert and James Lawton Collins, Jr., *Vietnam Studies: Allied Participation in Vietnam* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 120-131 and hereafter referred to as *Allied Participation*. ROK troops were deployed as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Strength</u>
1964	Mobile surgical hospital	130

1964	Tae Kwon Do training team	10
1965	Dove Unit: engineers and support forces	1,988
1965	Capital division (-) and Marine Brigade and support forces	18,904
1966	9th (White Horse) Division (+) and support forces	23,865
1967	Marine battalion (-) and support forces	2,963
1969	C-46 air crew	12

(Source Larsen and Collins, p. 131)

⁵ See the following for outstanding examples of such criticisms: *The Indochina Story: A Fully Documented Account by the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars* (New York: Bantam, 1970), pp. 141-143; "Money for Men," *The New Republic*, Vol. 165, No. 15 (9 October 1971), pp. 7-9; James Otis, "Seoul's Hired Guns," *Ramparts*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (September 1972), pp. 18-20, 56-57; Frank Baldwin, "The American Utilization of South Korean Troops in Vietnam," in *America's Rented Troops: South Koreans in Vietnam* (Philadelphia: American Friends Service Committee, 1974(?)), pp. 1-15. The Koreans preferred to see their soldiers as "freedom crusaders" or "freedom fighters." Lee, Eun Ho and Yong Soon Yim, *Politics of Military Civic Action: The Case of South Korean and South Vietnamese Forces in the Vietnamese War* (Hong Kong: Asian Research Service, 1980), p.84.

⁶ The best work on containment is John Lewis Gaddis' *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁷ See later how Washington may have been deceived as to the actual conditions in Vietnam at this time by the military.

⁸ Kim, *Asian Survey*, June 1970, pp. 521-522.

⁹ A battalion is an organization of approximately 1,000 infantry soldiers. Although comparing battalions among different armies is tricky due to relative differences in doctrine and organization (for example, a Soviet battalion is about two-thirds the size of a U.S. battalion), a Korean battalion can be equated to a U.S. battalion since the ROK Army is largely the product of U.S. advisory efforts and has replicated U.S. doctrine and organization.

¹⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, *U.S. Security Agreement and Commitment Abroad*, Vol II, Parts 5 (Japan) and 6 (Korea). Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations, 91st Congress, 2nd Session, Washington, D.C.: U.S.

Government Printing Office, 1971, pp. 1730-1732.
Hereafter referred to as Symington Hearings.

CHAPTER 1

1954: Korea and Vietnam - A Prelude

1961: The May 16 Coup Emergence of a new U.S. policy for Korea "Kick Start" for the Japan-Korea Talks

1954: Prelude

Korea's interest and attitude toward the anti-communist fighting in Indochina can be dated to the earliest years of U.S. involvement in the conflict. In the early weeks of 1954, the French operations at Dien Bien Phu were in trouble and the United States, after assisting the French with billions of dollars of aid, considered both direct intervention and obtaining third-nation support to help the French.

At the end of January 1954, Korean president Syngman Rhee made an unsolicited offer to the U.S. to deploy a division of Korean troops to Vietnam to assist the French forces. A visceral anti-communist, Rhee provided two reasons for the offer. The first to show Korea's appreciation for the help she just had received from UN forces during the Korean War. The second was to encourage anti-communism in Southeast Asia. These two themes would be repeated when the issue of troop deployments surfaced again in the mid-1960s. It remained the official rationales for Korea's involvement.

For Rhee however, there also was a personal motive in this

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initial offer, which was characterized by the U.S. Ambassador to South Korea at the time, Ellis O. Biggs, as "a burning desire to mobilize an anti-communist front in Asia under his leadership and to court U.S. public opinion." Thus, the principle motive for the offer was a desire for regional political power, and to make Korea a central player in the worldwide fight against communism. This, too, would re-emerge as a dominant theme in later deliberations in Korea.

Although, initially, Rhee's offer was received favorably by the U.S. Army staff through a feasibility study in February 1954, it was politely rejected by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) on 1 March of that year. As reasons for the rejection, the JCS cited the expected operational and logistical difficulties of supporting a Korean force in a French command and, more important, a concern that the American public would question the necessity of maintaining U.S. troops in Korea when Korea could afford to send a division to Indochina. However, Washington clearly recognized at that time one Asian nation coming to the aid of another Asian nation to fight communist aggression was a highly desirable situation and could lead to the formation of a viable Asian anti-communist bloc.¹

In retrospect, Rhee's offer was a remarkable one, considering that the Korean War had just ended and economically, South Korea was absolutely dependent upon the U.S. But it is highly possible, given Rhee's personal

ambitions. that he saw the Indochina war as an opportunity for economic recovery while establishing political points in both the international and the domestic arenas. This concept of dual political and economic gains remained one of the main themes of the Korean decisions on Vietnam in the 1960s.

New Korea Policy

While the Indochinese situation deteriorated further in 1961, South Korea was going through convulsions of its own. Having as their roots the heavy-handed tactics used by Rhee since 1945 to consolidate his control over the country, anti-government sentiments grew until they exploded in 1960 with Rhee's overthrow. This change was tacitly approved by the U.S., which saw in Rhee an increasingly inept and vainglorious old man holding down Korea's development. The short lived Second Republic of Chang Myŏn received U.S. support, but factionalism and a reluctance to institute needed reform measures led to Korea's first military coup of the modern era in May 1961 by General Park Chung Hee. Park was committed to developing national wealth and power through economic development. Initially he did not enjoy U.S. support. For the U.S., a coup by an American-trained army was not only a policy reversal, but an international embarrassment. Not until Park established an ostensibly civilian government with the elections of October and November 1963 would the U.S. commit itself to fully

supporting the Park regime.² However, the U.S. would retain its reservations about Park until he had demonstrated in words and deeds, his loyalty to the U.S.- ROK alliance through his support of the Vietnam War and the normalization treaty.

John F. Kennedy's election in 1960 marked the beginning of a new era in American foreign policy. Kennedy, who was dissatisfied with the Cold War mentality of the Eisenhower administration, was determined to change the equation of international relations. Although the Kennedy administration's focus was primarily in Europe, a warning from Eisenhower just before Kennedy's inauguration, that Laos was a hot spot that needed immediate attention forced Kennedy to examine the Asian situation. U.S. policy in Asia revolved around containing the threat of communist Chinese aggression. While Kennedy saw the need for a new China policy, memories of the Korean War and the McCarthy era persecutions were still too fresh to allow such a policy to develop. The narrow margin of Kennedy's election in November, he felt, didn't give him a strong enough public mandate to implement such a radical change and to battle against the still strong and influential Taiwan lobby.³ Instead, Kennedy continued a policy initiated at the end of World War II, under which Japan formed the locus of an Asian anti-communist bloc. The Korean War forced Korea to become part of this formula as well, and with massive aid (\$3.3 billion

between 1953 and 1960), which financed 95 percent of the cost of the Korean armed forces and over 90 percent of her imports, the U.S. maintained Korea as a frontier bastion of anti-communism.⁴

A New U.S. Policy for Korea

In the months between Kennedy's inauguration in Washington and the May 1961 coup in Seoul, as his new administration attempted to prioritize the extant foreign and domestic issues, a concerted effort was made to reexamine U.S.'s Korea policy. It was clear that the Chang Myŏn government was failing to implement measures to put the country on the path toward development, and a political crisis seemed imminent. In a series of memoranda in the White House in March to deputy National Security Adviser Walt Rostow, National Security Council (NSC) aides Robert Komer and Robert Johnson urged a reorientation of U.S. policy from one of emphasis on military aid to economic aid. They even endorsed Chang Myŏn's proposal to reduce the ROK military strength by 100,000 to free aid money for economic development assistance.⁵ The outgoing U.S. ambassador, McConaughy, in a long cable in April to report the current situation in Korea, stressed the shortcomings of the Chang Myŏn leadership and the "absolute necessity" for a long range economic development plan for Korea. He further emphasized the key role which Japan could play in Korea's

economic development, and the possible need for a more active role by the U.S. in quickly bringing about a normalization treaty between the two countries to allow this to happen. Treaty talks had languished since negotiations opened in 1951.⁶

On April 12, 1961, Samuel D. Berger, a career foreign service officer who previously had had a one-year experience in the Far East as Counsellor of Embassy in Tokyo in 1953, was appointed to be the new ambassador to Korea. It would be Berger's responsibility to implement the new policy being formulated by a Presidential Task Force. On May 16th General Park led a bloodless military coup which toppled the Chang Myŏn government. The initial weeks after the coup were marked by confusion and uncertainty in both Seoul and Washington. A cautious wait and see attitude was taken by the State Department, which nevertheless authorized Berger to deal with the Revolutionary Committee.⁷ The U.S. and UN military commander, General Magruder, quickly surmised that the true leader was General Park and not General Chang, the Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff and the announced Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee.⁸ The peacefulness of the coup, the retention of Yun Posŏn as the President, and the seeming indifference of the populace to the political crisis posed a challenge to U.S. policy makers. A 27 May press conference by the new foreign minister, Kim Hong Il, provided U.S. policy makers with some reassurances as Kim stressed the importance of

maintaining close ties with the U.S.⁹ However, the CIA noted a new sense of nationalism which, combined with the junta's inexperience and unwillingness to accept outside advice, the Agency thought spelled a tougher stance toward the U.S.¹⁰ The U.S. convened a meeting on June 3rd of the ambassadors of the sixteen nations that provided troops in the Korean War to assess the situation. Their conclusion was that, although how the new regime was going to turn out remained uncertain, because of the seemingly worthy patriotic and idealistic motivations of the junta, the new regime seemed to be a viable political alternative for Korea. International legal recognition was not a problem since President Yun Posŏn remained in office.¹¹

The Presidential Task Force on Korea delayed publishing its recommendations for a new policy until the Korean domestic situation had settled. After the Task Force's initial draft was issued on June 5, 1961, the White House and the State Department staffs bargained on the specific recommendations. The thrust of the report was realistic and somewhat generous to the new regime. It concluded that there was no alternative for the U.S. but to work with the new government, now termed the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction (SCNR), and recommended that the emphasis of a new Korea policy should be on long-term economic, political, and social development and not on the military. The draft included proposals for obtaining

assistance for Korea from Japan and Germany, for a substantial reduction of the Korean armed forces, and for the U.S. to serve as a catalyst for the normalization talks between Korea and Japan.¹² A White House working meeting on 12 June, held in preparation for an NSC meeting the next day, strengthened the recommendation to focus on economic development, and further specified that the Japan-ROK relationship should be discussed at the upcoming visit by the Japanese Prime Minister Ikeda on June 20, 1961.¹³ The recommendations were approved by Kennedy at the NSC meeting.

The participants in these policy meetings saw the potential difficulties of bringing about a normalization treaty. To these men, Korea's new regime seemed more anti-Japanese than the Chang Myŏn government. Thus, a settlement between the two countries would be more difficult. Accordingly, implicit in these decisions was the recognition of a need for a greater U.S. effort to successfully accomplish the normalization.

An important caveat opinion was appended to the draft by the Department of Defense (DOD), which viewed any reduction of the ROK military as dangerous and destabilizing and as inviting renewed aggression by the North Koreans, the Communist Chinese, or both. The military naturally saw the ROK forces as a direct adjunct to the U.S. military; after all, 95 percent of the ROK defense budget was funded by the U.S. Among other things, the

DOD caveat argued that Korean forces could release U.S. forces to meet contingencies elsewhere in the Pacific theater, especially in Southeast Asia.¹⁴

Restarting the Japan-Korea Talks

Japanese Prime Minister Ikeda's state visit on June 20, 1961 marked not only President Kennedy's first effort to insure that the U.S.-Japanese relationship remained on course, but also the initiation of a more active U.S. involvement in the Japanese-Korean talks. A joint communique issued by Kennedy and Ikeda stressed the special relationship between the U.S. and Japan; however, it did not mention the Japan-ROK treaty. Later events clearly demonstrate that the treaty was discussed, and the discussion marked the beginning of strenuous U.S. efforts to reopen normalization talks, which had been suspended since mid-May due to the coup. Ikeda's main purpose of the visit was not the Korean issue, rather, his agenda centered on the U.S.-Japanese economic relationship that was so vital to continued Japanese development, and the Ryukyus restoration issue.¹⁵

Kennedy reassured Ikeda on both issues: the United States would continue to maintain a good trade relationship with Japan, and Japan would play an increasingly important role in the economic development of the Ryukyus as a first step toward restoration of those islands to Japanese sovereignty.

In August, 1961, Kennedy would also authorize the creation of an interagency Task Force on the Ryukyus to devise recommendations for a new U.S. policy.¹⁶ The Task Force's report in December, 1961 emphasized the strategic importance of Okinawa, but also noted the increasing desire by the residents to be part of Japan. The long-term economic situation being unfavorable, the Task Force recommended allowing Japan to provide greater aid to Okinawa. The Task Force further proposed specific measures for returning the administration of the islands to civil control, granting greater autonomy for the Government of the Ryukyu Islands (GRI), and allowing more civil rights for the island's inhabitants.¹⁷ In fact, an earlier policy document by the State Department in October, 1961 recommended a greater Japanese role in the economic and social development of the islands as a means to revert control to Japan in "manageable proportions."¹⁸ The reason for anyone wanting to limit Japanese aid was later described by Ambassador Reischauer.

...The American military looked on the retention of Okinawa as essential to America's future military position in the Western Pacific, because it feared the loss some time of its bases in Japan. It saw the Japanese government as its chief challenger for control of Okinawa and suspected our Embassy of conspiring with the Japanese in this. Caraway [Army general and the American High Commissioner of Okinawa] had to work through the Embassy in his relations with the Japanese government, which at the time was trying to give more economic aid to Okinawa to raise its living standards a little closer to the Japanese average. As a result, I would find myself in the absurd position at the annual conference on Okinawa held in Tokyo of insisting on keeping Japanese aid down so that

it would not exceed aid from America and thus supposedly cause the United States to lose face.¹⁹

Kennedy had another opportunity in June to get the normalization talks in motion. In a meeting to receive the credentials of the new ROK ambassador, Chung Ilkwon, on June 30, 1961, Kennedy spoke of the importance of continued U.S. support for Korea, of the importance of ROK economic and social progress, and of the vital role Japan could play in that progress once relations between those two nations were normalized.²⁰ By the end of June then, the President had the opportunity to personally emphasize U.S. interest in reopening the Japan-ROK talks to both parties.

After a brief scare in July, 1961, when Park purged the military by retiring 40 generals,²¹ and some speculation that the communists might have been behind the coup,²² Korea and Japan began their tentative talks face-to-face in early August. This first meeting was characterized by Ambassador Berger as "inauspicious."²³ Evidently, further pressures would be needed.

Washington's foreign policy focus in the summer and fall of 1961 was on Europe, drawn there by the crisis caused by the erection of the Berlin Wall. However, the State Department continued its efforts to develop the evolving relationship with the military regime in Korea and to spark the normalization talks. There was also a growing realization that the Southeast Asian situation was getting worse as a result of the impasse in

Laos over its neutralization and a growing insurgency in South Vietnam. In May, Kennedy had approved deploying an additional 500 advisers to Vietnam in violation of the 1954 Geneva Treaty.²⁴

Toward the end of August, the State Department proposed inviting Park over for an "informal working visit" in November.²⁵ Ambassador Berger heartily endorsed the suggestion, seeing in it a golden opportunity for a the President to pressure Park to reestablish a civilian government and settle with Japan.²⁶

- ¹ Spector, Ronald H., *Advice and Support: The Early Years of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, 1941-1960* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), p. 198. This is the commercial version of the first volume in an on-going effort by the U.S. Army Center of Military History to publish a complete set of the official U.S. Army history of the Vietnam War. So far, five volumes have been published by the U.S. Government Printing Office.
- ² Olsen, *U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, pp. 5-8. Also, Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New*, pp. 352-361.
- ³ Rusk, *As I Saw It*, pp. 282-291.
- ⁴ Report to the National Security Council by the Presidential Task Force on Korea, June 5, 1961. NSF, Country, Box 127, JFK Library, p. 16 & Appendix C.
- ⁵ See for example, Memoranda: Komer to Rostow, 9 Mar 61; Johnson to Rostow, 15 Mar 61; Komer to Rostow, 15 Mar 61; all in NSF, Country, Box 127, JFK Library.
- ⁶ Seoul Embassy Telegram (Embtel) 1349, 11 Apr 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- ⁷ State Department Telegram (Deptel) 1321, 17 May 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- ⁸ CINCUNC message to JCS, 17 May 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- ⁹ Seoul Embtel 1698, 29 May 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- ¹⁰ Special National Intelligence Estimate (SNIE) 42-2-61: "Short-Term Prospects in South Korea," 31 May 61, NSF, Country, Box 127, JFK Library.
- ¹¹ Deptel 1421, 3 Jun 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- ¹² Presidential Task Force on Korea Report to the NSC, June 5, 1961, NSF, Country, Box 127, JFK Library.
- ¹³ Summary and Revisions of Recommendations of Task Force Report on Korea, June 13, 1961, NSF, Country, Box 127, JFK Library.
- ¹⁴ Appendix E to Task Force Korea Report, "Department of Defense Assessment of Current Korean Military Situation," NSF, Country, Box 127, JFK Library.

- 15 Havens. *Fire*. pp.19-21.
- 16 National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 68. 1 Aug 61, JFK Library.
- 17 Reports and Recommendations of the Task Force Ryukyus, December 1961. POF, Country. Box 123b. JFK Library.
- 18 Japan: Department of State Guidelines for Policy and Operations, October, 1961. Thomson Papers, Box 17, JFK Library.
- 19 Reischauer. *My Life Between Japan and America*. p. 204 (Hereafter referred to as *Life*).
- 20 Memorandum of Conversation (Memcon). Kennedy & Chung, 30 Jun 61, NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 21 Seoul Embtel 23, 4 July 61 and Deptel 32, 6 July 61. NSF, Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- 22 Memo, R. Johnson to Rostow, 28 June 61. NSF, Country, Box 127 and Seoul Embtel 88, 15 July 61, NSF, Country, Box 128. JFK Library.
- 23 Seoul Embtel 223, 3 Aug 61. NSF, Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- 24 The U.S., along with South Vietnam, had not signed the Geneva Treaty, but had observed until Kennedy's decision of May 1961, its limitation on foreign advisory forces in North and South Vietnam. Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 431.
- 25 Deptel 276, 21 Aug 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- 26 Seoul Embtel 370, 23 Aug 61, NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.

CHAPTER 2

November 1961 - June 1962 The Vietnam Factor The First Korean Offer

The U.S. Aid Factor

In October, 1961, Washington and Seoul were finalizing the details for Park's visit in November recently approved by Kennedy. The U.S. foreign aid bill for fiscal year 1962 was passed shortly after the Koreans made it clear to Ambassador Berger that the measure of success of Park's visit would depend on the amount of additional aid and loans granted to Korea. The news for Korea was not good. The final figure for economic assistance was at least fifty million dollars below that recommended by the Korea Task Force and represented a large reduction from the 1961 aid level.¹

The problem was that U.S. aid was being reduced world wide due to a budget filled with rapidly increasing military expenditures under President Kennedy and SECDEF McNamara. Park was worried. He feared that the aid reduction and additional U.S. pressures for a rapid return to civilian rule as well as settlement with Japan might make his visit counter-productive. Berger tried to reassure him by stating that the most important thing was to enhance the ROK's world standing something that the visit could achieve. Further, Berger told Park, without

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additional detail. that the State Department was looking for ways to compensate for the lower aid.²

In the first days of November 1961. Secretary Rusk made a trip to Japan to participate in the first bilateral economic summit as agreed by Kennedy and Ikeda in June. He took this opportunity not only to encourage the Japan-ROK negotiations which had formally opened on 20 October, but to make a side trip to Korea to personally reassure Park on continued U.S. support. In their conversations on 5 November, Rusk offered U.S. help in the talks and gave assurances that the ROK military would not be reduced.³ This change in policy considerations toward the size of the ROK military makes more sense if on-going developments in Vietnam are examined.

Vietnam: Taylor-Rostow Mission

The deteriorating situation in Vietnam toward the end of 1961 began to heat up the policy making bureaucracy. The conference in Geneva on Laos notwithstanding, there was a widely held belief that Laos was a lost cause, a defeat in the face of communist expansionism. There is ample evidence to support that Kennedy saw Vietnam as a place to make a stand and demonstrate to the world and especially Asian allies that the United States would not allow another nation to be subjugated by communism.⁴ This stand was boldly asserted through the

crash trip laid on for Vice President Johnson through Southeast Asia in May 1961.

In April, an interagency task force on Vietnam was created under Roswell Gilpatric, the Deputy Secretary of Defense. The Vietnam Task Force recommendations along with those made by Air Force General Lansdale after his fact finding trip to Vietnam in January 1961, resulted in Kennedy's approval of increasing economic and military aid to bolster the Diem regime and to implement an aggressive counter-insurgency plan by increasing the size of the Vietnamese Army and the Civil Guard.⁵

Despite these efforts, the Vietcong (VC: communist guerillas in South Vietnam) insurgency continued to grow along with more overt indications of North Vietnamese support. Although partially overshadowed by the drama of the Berlin wall construction, the summer of 1961 indicated an ever deteriorating situation in Vietnam. By that fall, a growing consensus in Washington saw a need for a more assertive move by the U.S. On 11 October, the State Department proposed a concept for U.S. intervention in Vietnam and Laos with a Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) force.⁶ Both Defense and the NSC considered the introduction of sizable U.S. combat forces to counter the growing strength of the Vietcong. Dissatisfied with recommendations for direct military intervention, Kennedy dispatched his White House military adviser, General Maxwell Taylor, and Walt Rostow to Vietnam on a fact finding mission.

The Taylor-Rostow mission would be credited later as the beginning of substantial U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. To Kennedy's chagrin and contrary to his pre-trip guidance, the Taylor-Rostow report, as endorsed by the JCS, while recognizing that the Vietnamese themselves must win the war, called for a significant increase in U.S. advisory forces to bolster the Vietnamese. In addition, Taylor and Rostow recommended sending a logistical force of 6,000 to 8,000 men to support the advisory effort. They further noted that eventual deployment of U.S. combat forces may be necessary. Kennedy, though loath to "lose" Vietnam to the communists, did not want to significantly escalate the U.S. involvement. He took the middle road by expanding the advisory effort, but disapproved the logistical force and hoped that that would be sufficient to stabilize the situation. The number of U.S. advisers would go up from over 3,000 in December 1961 to 9,000 by the end of 1962.⁷

When the Taylor-Rostow report was first transmitted by cable to Washington, Rusk was in Tokyo and received an information copy. He immediately cabled the President on November 1st and stressed the "portentous" nature of the decision to send U.S. combat troops to Vietnam. It was not that Rusk was against the recommendation, only that if the decision was made, then the U.S. had to be prepared to follow through to the end.⁸ Thus, when Rusk met Park on 5 November, he was very aware of the deliberations in Washington regarding Vietnam. As

one of the staunchest supporters of the collective security concept and the validity of SEATO. Rusk foresaw the need to maintain a large ROK military either to release U.S. troops for a Vietnam contingency or to actually send ROK troops to Vietnam.

Rusk apparently failed to convey his change of policy with regard to the size of the ROK armed forces to the White House and his staff. On November 13th, the day before Park was due to arrive in Washington, NSC staff member Robert Johnson sent a memorandum to the President stating that one of the approaches to help ROK economic development was to "begin a gradual shift in emphasis from military to economic assistance" by getting the Koreans committed now to a "small initial cut in ROK armed forces and a compensatory shift of a small amount of MAP [military assistance program] money into economic assistance." Johnson also observed that the State briefing papers made the same recommendation.⁹ Indeed, the Presidential briefing book for the Park visit devoted one and one half pages to the reduction issue.¹⁰ As late as June 1963, Kennedy considered reduction of the ROK armed forces as a viable alternative for obtaining more money for economic assistance.¹¹ No one can be certain as to how long Kennedy would have maintained this option. What is certain is that, with President Johnson's steady escalation of the Vietnam War in 1964, accompanied by

attempts to involve other nations, the option to reduce the ROK military was quickly eliminated.

Kennedy-Park Meeting

Park's trip to the U.S. in November was a personal triumph and solidified and legitimized his position as Korea's leader. The Seoul newspapers were filled with enthusiastic editorials.¹² His return to Seoul on November 25th was almost heroic as half a million flag waving citizens lined the road from the airport to Seoul to welcome him back.¹³ The U.S. assessment was equally enthusiastic. A State Department cable to Seoul stated, "Chairman PAK's [sic] visit [was] successful in achieving [the] results we had hoped for...Chairman made [a] very good impression on U.S. officials with whom he came in contact. [He] Appeared dedicated, intelligent, confident, fully in command [of] his govt, and quite aware of [the] magnitude [of the] problems he faces."¹⁴

On his way to Washington, Park visited Prime Minister Ikeda in Tokyo, which resulted in a deeper appreciation of the mutual domestic concerns relating to the normalization talks. Park made the most of his two day stay in Washington. In his two meetings with Kennedy, in addition to the ROK economic development and Japan-ROK negotiations, a significant amount of time was spent discussing Vietnam. In fact, it was the very first issue discussed in the first meeting. Asked by Kennedy

whether Park might have any ideas on Vietnam. Park apparently answered that the situation seemed grave and that Korea would be willing to share the burden with the U.S. in its resolution.¹⁵ A grateful Kennedy suggested in reply that the Philippines might also be willing to help.

The reason for Park's implied offer of Korean troops for Vietnam must remain speculative. What seems reasonable to speculate is that the troops were offered to tie Korea to the U.S. military effort in Vietnam to a significant degree. Such a relationship could dampen both American doubts about his political legitimacy and U.S. pressures for holding an election. Furthermore, the military partnership could provide a leverage for either halting the reduction in military and economic aid to Korea or even reversing that trend. Korean troops for Vietnam could be used as a bargaining chip for subtle Korean pressures on Washington to modify U.S. policies which were contrary to Park's own plans and timetable for Korea.

At their second meeting on November 15th, Park suggested that additional outside help could be the solution for Vietnam. Although Kennedy hoped it wouldn't be necessary, he promised to keep Park informed on future developments on this issue.¹⁶ November 1961 marked not only the decision for a sharp escalation of the U.S. advisory effort in Vietnam, but the

willing involvement of Korea as well in words if not in immediate commitments.

Vietnam 1962

As U.S. advisers poured into Vietnam, a new command was created in February 1962 to handle the expanded American force. With its mission to assist and support the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) in defeating the VC insurgency, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) quickly became the central conduit for information on the war's progress.¹⁷ The initial American efforts, especially the massive introduction of helicopters, brought success on the battlefield. The Vietcong, however, quickly learned to compensate for their disadvantages, and by the spring and summer of 1962, controlled the battlefields once again.¹⁸ Yet, the reporting generated by MACV created a false sense of continued success in Washington.

The Strategic Hamlets program for pacification, begun on 3 January, quickly became a white elephant successful only on paper. Within a month, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) reported over 1,300 fortified hamlets under the program. The overly optimistic reporting continued with 2,500 fortified hamlets being reported by August.¹⁹

The apparent self-deception practiced by MACV was so thorough that by April 1962, MACV commander General Harkins was able to brief two visiting generals that military victory was

now "at hand." These same two generals found that field advisers were totally skeptical that the Vietcong could be defeated so quickly.²⁰

Concurrently, the attention in Washington was more on Laos than Vietnam as the Geneva talks reached its climax in July with the accord that would ostensibly neutralize Laos. In that summer of optimism, General Harkins claimed that the Vietcong could be defeated within a year after the Army of Vietnam (ARVN) was built up in accordance with his plans. Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) McNamara was a little more cautious and felt that the end of 1965 was a more realistic date for subduing the insurgency.²¹

Korea and Vietnam 1962

As events evolved in Indochina, Park set in motion, soon after his return from the U.S., actions to prepare for a possible Korean involvement in the war. In early 1962, Kim Chong Pil, the head of the Korean CIA (KCIA) and Park's right hand man, was sent to Vietnam on a fact finding trip. Contrary to the optimistic reports coming through U.S. channels, Kim found the situation discouraging. However, the view taken by Korea was that Korean troops could make a difference to the war. Park himself had made the suggestion in person to Kennedy. When roving Ambassador Harriman made a visit to Korea on 17 March, Prime Minister Song Yo Chan told him that Korea was very

concerned about Vietnam and was willing to send troops despite potential domestic problems.²² Harriman must have been puzzled by both Kim's pessimistic report and the troop offer since it contradicted his own information on the Vietnam situation. In May, a story broke in the Korean press about a ROK military assistance mission to Vietnam. A Korean reporter in Washington reported that the U.S. government believed that Vietnam "could be [helped] by [the] ROK if [the] two countries can work out [a] proper arrangement through which experienced Korean military officers can render their advice to Vietnamese operations against [the] Viet Cong." The story also mentioned a ROK-Vietnam governmental discussion on the possibility of Korean assistance, an occurrence which was purported to have been passed on to the U.S. government. In truth, at that very moment, an ROK military fact finding mission was in Vietnam to make recommendations for possible forms of ROK assistance. Ambassador Berger took the opportunity of the breaking news story to remind the ROK government that the fact finding mission should work closely with MACV to insure that their recommendations were in consonance with U.S. plans and efforts in Vietnam. He received full assurances.²³ The State Department soon released a statement saying that the ROK mission was in Vietnam at the invitation of the Vietnamese government.²⁴ In the first few months of 1962, unaffected by MACV's falsely optimistic reports, Korea judged the Vietnam

situation to be critical enough to begin systematic coordination and planning efforts as preparation for a contingency deployment to Vietnam. While Korea would not be asked to send troops until 1964, it is important to understand that coordination with the U.S. and the RVN was established by mid-1962. When combat troop deployments were seriously being contemplated again in 1964 and 1965, the U.S. took for granted that at least a division of ROK troops would be available. Although the legalities under Korean law would necessitate a legislative process to approve the deployments after the reversion to a civilian government in December 1963, Park never doubted that he would be able to send troops to Vietnam once the need arose.

Japan-Korea Talks

In the midst of these developments, a more critical issue developed for Japan and Korea. Toward the end of 1961, the normalization negotiations broke down once again. Both sides had taken uncompromising positions, especially with regard to reparation claims and fisheries rights, which deadlocked the talks. As happened many times in the past, charges of Japanese "insincerity" were levelled by the Korean public.²⁵ The ROK government (ROKG) attempted to play down the issue and remained optimistic.

On a long overseas trip, Deputy Prime Minister Kim Yu Taek visited Japan in February and again in March of 1962. The U.S. attempted to spark some progress by dispatching Ambassador Harriman to Japan and Korea in March.²⁶ It is likely that Ambassadors Berger and Reischauer held a strategy session during the Far East Chief of Mission Conference held at Baguio, Phillipines in early March.

In Washington, a concentrated effort was made to try to bring the talks back on track. Reischauer on 18 April and Berger on 24 April, met their respective foreign ministers to figure out a way to break the deadlock.²⁷ On 23 April, perhaps not fully cognizant of the serious negotiation problems, President Kennedy requested McGeorge Bundy, the National Security Adviser, to come up with an up to date report on the assistance Japan was providing to South Korea.²⁸ The following day, an NSC meeting was held to discuss the Japan-ROK issue. The result was National Security Action Memorandum (NSAM) 151, which charged the Secretary of State (SECST) to investigate appropriate U.S. actions to bring the negotiations between Japan and ROK to a successful conclusion.²⁹ Rusk completed his report on 17 May and stated, *inter alia*, that the main problem was the claims amounts, with the ROK's figures being too high and Japan's figures being too low. In addition, the approaching Japanese lower house elections in July made Premier Ikeda reluctant to take up the controversial issue until afterwards.

Finally, Rusk recommended direct Presidential pressure in the form of personal messages to the two sides.³⁰ Former Prime Minister Yoshida, at a meeting with Kennedy on 3 May and the Japanese Foreign Minister on 29 April, expressed their opinion that while they felt optimistic about a settlement, the talks probably should not begin until after the July elections.³¹

Some hope for a thaw came from the approval by the ROKG on 16 May of a small rotating Japanese mission in Seoul.³² Using Rusk's memo of 17 May and the mandate given by NSAM 151, the NSC Standing Group met on 18 May for a strategy session. They observed that, while Japan had been favorably disposed toward a settlement in 1961, Japanese domestic political problems and the balance of payment problem were causing Japan to drag its feet in 1962. They also noted that, although the U.S. was greatly interested in the normalization, there was little leverage which could be used by the U.S. to push the talks along. In fact, adverse public reaction to U.S. meddling could actually retard the process. The resumption of nuclear testing in April by the U.S. had created a storm of protest and controversy in Japan.³³ In conclusion, prospects for an early settlement was not good and U.S. policy would remain unchanged: to influence the talks without becoming a mediator.³⁴ There was little that could be done until after the Japanese elections in July.

U.S.-Japanese relations continued on good terms. On March 19th, the President signed an amendment to Executive Order (EO) 10713 covering the administration of the Ryukyus. The amendment represented a virtually unadulterated adoption of the recommendations made by the Presidential Task Force on the Ryukyus formed in August 1961 by NSAM 68. The final Task Force report fulfilled many of the promises made by Kennedy to Ikeda at their meeting in June 1961. Representing a significant recognition and advancement of Japanese interests, it provided the foundation for the eventual full restoration of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty in May 1972.³⁵ An important caveat was the implicit understanding between Japan and the U.S. that, as long as a significant Pacific communist threat existed, U.S. would maintain control of Okinawa for military purposes. In the 1960s, the Vietnam War provided the justification for holding back on a quick return of the Ryukyus islands.

When the U.S. began to bomb North Vietnam in March 1965, Okinawa served as one of the more important bomber bases. Growing Japanese public opposition to the war heated the Okinawa issue. Ikeda's successor, Sato, also dreamed of the return of Okinawa, but he also wanted to insure that nothing jeopardized the thriving, but troublesome U.S.-Japan economic relationship. Sato remained a staunch supporter of U.S. policies in Vietnam. Remaining on good terms with the U.S. to insure the restoration of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty and

to maintain a liberal trade relationship required support for the Japan-ROK normalization treaty as well. This connection became even stronger when Korea began sending troops to Vietnam in 1964. Growing numbers of Japanese criticized the war and the normalization talks, often lumping the two issues together. For example, in August 1965, a protest group called the Antiwar Youth Committee (*Hansen Seinen Iinkai*) was organized by the leftist union confederation Sohyo and the Japanese Socialist Party to resist the normalization treaty and the Vietnam War.³⁶ Even though the vocal minority outcry against the war and the talks were loud and violent at times, most ordinary Japanese were either neutral or supported the two issues.³⁷

Thus, one more factor was introduced into the increasingly complicated relationship emerging among the three countries in the early 1960s. For the U.S., the Vietnam War and the commitment to containing communist expansion in Asia was becoming dominant. For Japan, Okinawa and a favorable economic relationship with the U.S. were the principle issues. For Korea, economic development and national security obtainable through close relationships with the U.S. and Japan were the objectives.

By mid-1962, the U.S. efforts in Vietnam seemed to be making progress (that is, from Washington's viewpoint, based on the overly optimistic and sometimes fallacious reporting from MACV), and the Japanese were satisfied for the moment with the

changes made to EO 10713 with regard to the Ryukyus. In June, Shannon McCune was appointed as the first civilian administrator of Okinawa. But the normalization talks were still bogged down and the U.S. would now exert extraordinary efforts to put it back on track.

- ¹ Deptel 461. 19 Oct 61. NSF. Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- ² Seoul Embtel 652. 31 Oct 61. NSF. Country. Box 128, JFK Library.
- ³ Memcon. Park-Rusk. 5 Nov 61. NSF. Country. Box 127, JFK Library.
- ⁴ Bundy, William P.. Unpublished manuscript on the Vietnam War, pp. 3-31 to 3-41. JFK Library (hereafter referred to as *Manuscript*).
- ⁵ *Ibid.* 3-35 & 3-36.
- ⁶ *Pentagon Papers. Senator Gravel Edition.* Vol 3, p. 140 (Hereafter formatted "PP 3:140").
- ⁷ Herring, *America's Longest War.* p. 80. Hereafter referred to as *Longest War*.
- ⁸ Rusk, *As I Saw It.* pp. 431-433.
- ⁹ Memo. R. Johnson to Pres. 13 Nov 61, NSF. Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- ¹⁰ Park Briefing Book. Position Paper H (Military Assistance and Modernization), NSF. Country. Box 128, JFK Library.
- ¹¹ Memcon. Kennedy & ROK Amb Kim. 17 Jun 63. NSF. Country. Box 127, JFK Library.
- ¹² Seoul Embtel 715, 15 Nov 61 and 720. 16 Nov 61. NSF. Country. Box 128, JFK Library.
- ¹³ Seoul Embtel 748, 25 Nov 61, NSF. Country. Box 128, JFK Library.
- ¹⁴ Deptel 1426, 4 Dec 61, NSF. Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- ¹⁵ Park's answer must remain conjectural because it has been sanitized in the document. However, Kennedy's response has not not been excised and combined with the second meeting on the 15th, records of which have not been exempted from declassification and reference is made to the first meeting. Park's answer on the 14th can easily be deduced.
- ¹⁶ Memcon. Park-Kennedy. 14 and 15 Nov 61. NSF. Country. Box 128. JFK Library.

- 17 Krepinevich. *The Army and Vietnam*, p.64 (hereafter referred to as *Army*).
- 18 Krepinevich. *Army*, pp. 75-6. Hilsman, Roger. *To Move A Nation*, pp. 444-446 (hereafter referred to as *Nation*).
- 19 Krepinevich. *Army*, pp. 68. Hilsman. *Nation*, pp. 430-435. The Hilsman account is particularly good in detailing the philosophy behind the strategic hamlets program and its subversion by South Vietnam in execution.
- 20 Krepinevich. *Army*, p. 76.
- 21 *Ibid.* p. 77.
- 22 Seoul Embtel 1041. 17 Mar 62. NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- 23 Seoul Embtel 1154. 5 May 62. NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- 24 Deptel 1022, 5 May 62. NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- 25 Seoul Embtel. 803. 12 Dec 61. NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- 26 Seoul Embtel 1041, 17 Mar 61 and 1047. 19 March 61. NSF, Country, Box 128, JFK Library.
- 27 Background paper for NSC Standing Group Meeting, Korean-Japanese Relations. 18 May 62, NSF, NSC Mtgs. Box 314, JFK Library.
- 28 Memo, Pres to McGeorge Bundy, 23 Apr 62. POF, Staff Memo, Box 62a. JFK Library.
- 29 As of April 1991, NSAM 151 remains classified. Its mandate, however, has been revealed by Rusk's memo to the President on 17 May which refers to NSAM 151.
- 30 Memo, Rusk to Pres. 17 May 62, NSF, NSC Mtgs. Box 314, JFK Library.
- 31 see notes 53 and 55.
- 32 see note 53.
- 33 Reischauer. *Life*, pp. 239-240.
- 34 NSC Standing Group Meeting. Agenda, 18 May 62. NSF, NSC Mtgs, Box 314. JFK Library. The NSC Standing Group was formed

on 5 Jan 62. It's purpose was "to organize and monitor the work of the National Security Council. and to take up such other matters as may be presented to the Group by the members." Its membership consisted of the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (George McGhee), the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Roswell Gilpatric), the Director of Central Intelligence (John McCone), the Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (McGeorge Bundy) and the NSC Executive Secretary (Bromley Smith). Meeting every Friday, the Standing Group was clearly formed to coordinate inter-agency staff work in preparation for the NSC meetings by their principals. (Memo. NSC Record of Actions. re: Standing Group Meeting--January 5, 1962. 10 Jan 62, NSF. NSC Mtgs. Box 314)

³⁵ White House press release. 19 Mar 62. NSF. Country. Box 156.

³⁶ Havens. *Fire*. p. 82.

³⁷ For a detailed examination of the Japanese attitudes toward the Vietnam War and its related protest movements along with other related issues affecting Japan. see *Ibid*.

CHAPTER 3

July 1962 - May 1963 Japan-Korea Talks and the ROK Power Struggle

Vietnam Situation

The Indochina conflict seemed to be making dramatic progress as the U.S. continued to pour in advisers and materiel. In July 1962, the Laos Accords were signed in Geneva ostensibly turning that country into a "neutral." The strategic hamlets pacification program was showing an almost unbelievable success rate as literally thousands of hamlets were embraced by it. By September, the South Vietnamese Government reported 3,225 strategic hamlets completed and another 2,217 under construction.¹

The period from early 1962 to mid-1963 remains a controversial one for historians. Some claim that the deceptive reporting from Vietnam was designed to keep the U.S. in the conflict when Kennedy was faltering on his commitment and was seriously considering a withdrawal.² By the end of 1962, increasingly pessimistic reports by journalists like David Halberstam (New York Times) and Neil Sheehan (AP) troubled Kennedy. Although enraged by the media criticism of U.S. policy, Kennedy asked his old friend, Senator Mike Mansfield to make a trip to Vietnam. Mansfield's report in December was

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highly pessimistic and declared that no progress had been made in Vietnam since his last visit in 1955. While irate over the Mansfield report, Kennedy could not ignore the warnings, and despatched Hilsman from State and NSC staff member Forrestal to Vietnam for another assessment. The Hilsman-Forrestal report took a middle-of-the-road stance. Hilsman and Forrestal declared that South Vietnam and the U.S. were winning, but the "war would probably last longer than we would like."³

By the spring of 1963, MACV and the Pentagon thoroughly dominated Vietnam decision making stemming from both the size of the increasing military presence in Vietnam as well as Kennedy's grateful acceptance of McNamara's request to make Vietnam his responsibility. Rusk had never felt comfortable with Vietnam and was glad to allow McNamara handle it. Later, one of the chief criticisms levelled at Rusk as the Secretary of State (SECST) would be the way he "surrendered" responsibility for Vietnam to McNamara and his "whiz kids" at the Pentagon.⁴

Kennedy had also become dissatisfied with the U.S. Ambassador, "Fritz" Nolting, and thought about replacing him.⁵ MACV control of the war reporting was so powerful, it managed to turn the utterly disastrous Battle of Ap Bac in January 1963, into a victory for the ARVN.⁶ As late as May 1963, General Harkins, with mountains of statistical data for the SECDEF, declared at a conference in Honolulu, that the

insurgents would be defeated by Christmas.⁷ Although by now, McNamara had grown skeptical of Harkins' rosy reports, a new political crisis in South Vietnam turned his and the President's attention away from the battlefields. Just three days after the Honolulu conference, the Buddhist crisis erupted in South Vietnam. This ultimately culminated with the overthrow of President Diem's government and assassinations of Diem and his brother, Nhu, on 2 November.⁸

In the period from mid-1962 to mid-1963, the American foreign policy focus increasingly became Asian as the non-Asian crises were resolved one by one in the characteristic crisis management style of the Kennedy administration. The Cuban Missile crisis of October briefly focused attention back on the Soviet Union, but the U.S.-Soviet detente improved rapidly to the point of signing the Limited Test Ban Treaty in July 1963. Kennedy's speech at the American University commencement on June 10th, 1963, reflected a new optimism toward the future of the world and was Kennedy's vision of a new post-Cold War world order.⁹

The world looked stable except for Asia. China was still a forbidden territory for a new policy although Kennedy undoubtedly would have developed a new China policy after his reelection.¹⁰ The Japan-China trade agreement in November was uncomfortable, but tolerable and it was mitigated by the convening of the second U.S.-Japan economic summit also in

November. A more serious problem concerning China was the Sino-Indian War between October and December of 1962. It was an impressive display of Chinese skill at achieving international political aims. As Hilsman wrote, "Their attack had been a masterpiece of orchestrating military, political, and psychological instrumentalities as a single, limited, disciplined and controlled operation directed toward and subordinated to a political end."¹¹ China's growing militancy and skill combined with the possibility of developing a nuclear weapon within a short time created what Kennedy later described as a "potentially a more dangerous situation than any we faced since the end of the Second [World] War..."¹²

In Vietnam, despite MACV's and the embassy's optimistic reports, there was increasing overt evidence that the insurgency was succeeding and that South Vietnam was coming under the throes of paralysis. The infiltration from North Vietnam in violation of the Laos accords could not be ignored. When the Buddhist crisis erupted in May, Washington began to have serious doubts as to whether the war was going as well as they were led to believe.

To make the "Asian Crisis" complete, the Japan-ROK normalization talks had unravelled yet again in the midst of a political crisis in Korea.

Japan-Korea "Rollercoaster"

After the Japanese Lower House elections in July 1962, where the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) again won a majority, the State Department immediately took actions to reinitiate the normalization talks. In a cable to Ambassadors Berger and Reischauer in July, State's Korea Desk Officer, MacDonald, reiterated the U.S. policy to serve as a "catalyst" for the discussions and gave specific instructions to the ambassadors for action. Significantly, there was a greater degree of urgency than before and a willingness to play a more active role.

One of the stated courses of action was "to seek discreetly to serve during [the] course of negotiations as confidential informants to Chairman Pak [sic] and (if necessary,) to Japanese Prime Minister on [the] course of negotiations and [the] conduct of negotiators." Further, it laid out specific negative incentives which could be used as the "basis for influencing" the Japanese and the Koreans. For the Japanese, it would be the threat of souring the economic relationship; for the Koreans, cutting off support for the first Five-Year Development Plan (1962-1966) and U.S. Development Loans. The ambassadors were instructed to find out what the outstanding issues were, consult with each other and determine what U.S. actions might contribute to the settlement of the issues. Finally, MacDonald proposed sending a special

envoy to act as a go-between, but "cloaking his connection with [the] Japan-ROK negotiations."¹³ While Berger sent a message 11 days later that the talks were not at a stage where a special envoy was warranted, this key State cable of 13 July apparently started a firestorm of activities and interest in Washington as well as Seoul and Tokyo.

On 27 July, Rusk sent a cable to Seoul mentioning that troop withdrawal from Korea was being studied.¹⁴ The purpose of this message is uncertain. Knowing that it was an extremely sensitive issue with the Koreans, it might have been designed to further pressure the ROK that they needed to find other sources of economic support, namely Japan. Toward the end of July, Kim Yu Taek, the ROK Chairman of the Economic Planning Board (EPB), asked Berger and Killen, the AID (Agency for International Development) representative in Korea, if the U.S. would consider urging the World Bank to form an international consortium to underwrite the Five-Year Plan. While giving a noncommittal answer to Kim, Berger endorsed the idea to State stating that "such a move might help push [the] Japanese govt into [a] more cooperative attitude on [the] Japan-ROK settlement." and would give further evidence of U.S. support to the new regime to buttress their confidence and quell anti-Americanism among nationalists.¹⁵

As a follow-up to Berger's endorsement, Komer sent a note to Forrestal, both NSC staff members, which was a remarkable exposition of the White House view of the Korean situation:

My query is whether we can't *tie together* (a) U.S. support for such a consortium [for the 5-Year Plan]; (b) *force reduction* and MAP cut; and (c) ROK/Jap settlement. For example, we could tell ROKs it [would be] impossible to get other countries to give much in [the] consortium context until [the] ROKs have settled their affairs with Japan, which ought to take a healthy chunk of any consortium. Therefore, in our view consortium without Japan [would be] a non-starter. As to MAP tie-in, we could argue that neither we nor the Koreans could possibly reach even modified Five-Year Plan goals unless both of us divert resources from [the] present huge military ROK budget and U.S. MAP. We could put it frankly to Pak [sic] regime--would they prefer generous U.S. approach to economic development or for us to put money into modernizing ROK forces. We could tell them we think [the] development road [is] the better one, that we [are] convinced [that] ROK security would not be compromised by reduction in military effort so long as U.S. security commitment [is] firm and U.S. forces [are] present. We would make clear of course that we would continue to put a major MAP effort into ROK modernization, simply that it would not be as big as otherwise.¹⁶ (emphasis mine)

Two things are evident in this note. First, from the U.S. perspective, the priority for Korea was economic development, and political and military actions were to be subordinated to support a long range development scheme. Second, Rusk's promise to Park in November 1961 notwithstanding, reduction of the ROK military and MAP aid was still considered to be a viable and even a desirable option. Komer ended his note by writing:

Above may be great in theory but impossible to carry out in fact. However, before rejecting it we ought to carefully consider the objections. My sense is that unless State disagrees, we're going to decide on *some force and MAP cuts*. Why not put best face on these by tying them to our desire to help on [the] consortium, in addition to

using ROK interest in consortium as lever to promote ROK/Jap settlement? (emphasis mine)

There is no evidence that Komer's recommendations were ever considered seriously. The tie-in of the Five-Year Plan with the Japan-ROK settlement had already been implemented by State. But the ROK military was never in danger of a reduction, being supported by intense Pentagon lobbying, a lobby which became far more influential under McNamara's leadership and the Vietnam conflict. Although the reduction of military aid could not be stemmed, General Guy Meloy, who became the new commander in Korea in July 1961, obtained approval for suspending the programmed transfer of MAP funding to the ROK budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 1962 and 1963, something the Koreans had long requested to relieve their deficit budget.¹⁷ He further proposed that \$25.5 million dollars of MAP funds be spent in-country in Korea to not only obtain cheaper military equipment, but to help the Korean economy.¹⁸ For a defense budget which was only \$155 million for FY 62, these were significant amounts.¹⁹ Once Korea became a source of troops for Vietnam, further discussions on reducing the size of the ROK military would disappear.

On 21 August, Japan-ROK negotiations were formally resumed and Kennedy sent letters of congratulations to Park and Ikeda to provide gentle Presidential emphasis on the importance of the normalization.²⁰ The U.S. also resumed the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) negotiations with Korea in September,

having suspended them after the coup.²¹ As we shall see, the timing of the conclusion of the SOFA agreement would be tied not only to the restoration of a civilian regime, but also to the conclusion of the Japan-ROK talks.

In the U.S., the latter half of October 1962 would be dominated by the Cuban Missile crisis. While the world was on the brink of a nuclear conflict, KCIA Director Kim Chong Pil prepared to make a trip to Japan and the United States.

Despite exertions made by the U.S., the talks between Japan and Korea were not progressing, much to the consternation of the ROKG. One of Kim's objectives was to make a breakthrough in the talks by meeting with Premier Ikeda and Foreign Minister Ohira. To lay the groundwork for Kim's meetings, Choe Kyu Ha, the chief ROK negotiator, was recalled on 12 October and given a "new formula" for negotiating the financial claims. Kim departed for his three day stay in Tokyo on 20 October and met Ohira for two days and Ikeda on the final day. The Korean newspapers, Seoul and regional, were filled with stories and editorials exclaiming that the Kim - Ohira/Ikeda meetings would result in a breakthrough.²² After his first meeting with Ohira, Kim declared, "this is the first time Japan has shown such sincerity in solving Japan-ROK issues." and announced that the negotiations would be expedited.²³ Ohira was reported as saying that the talks will be concluded by March or April of 1963.²⁴

The optimism felt in October was genuine and a treaty could have been concluded by the following spring. The unexpected development was a power struggle in the military regime between the Park/Kim faction, supported by young progressive colonels, and the conservative senior generals over the structure of the government party being formed in preparation for the elections in 1963. The conflict became sharper toward the end of 1962 and undermined Japanese confidence in a stable regime and made an agreement impossible. Ironically, Japan preferred to deal with an authoritarian military government which it regarded as being more "stable." Japanese leaders were particularly distressed when Kim, Park's confidant and chief negotiator on the treaty, was "purged" and "exiled" to the U.S. after Park made a compromise with the opposing faction in January 1963.

The political crisis had an even deeper impact on Ambassador Berger. Reischauer later wrote, "Berger tried to put strong pressure on the Koreans to return to a democratic form of government; his heavy-handed approach won him the animosity of most Korean groups..."²⁵ In effect, the talks would be stalled until the Korean elections of late 1963 and the installation of a stable civilian regime.

Any inkling of the brewing political crisis in Korea was overshadowed in Washington by the Cuban missile crisis. Also, Kim Chong Pil's visit to the U.S. in the last week of October

was seen as a confidence building visit by a man accepted as Park's deputy. Indeed, retired general Van Fleet, former commander of the U.S. 8th Army during the Korean War and recently returned from leading an ambitious private industry and investment mission to Korea, personally wrote to the President on 16 October to underscore Kim's importance. Van Fleet declared Kim the "acting Prime Minister," and recommended that he meet with the SECST and the SECDEF.²⁶

Ambassador Berger, in a cable sent the next day, recommended a meeting between Kim and the SECST to discuss the Japan-ROK talks, but did not emphasize Kim's political position.²⁷ The ROK ambassador, Chung Ilkwon, practically begged that Kim be set up for appointments with the President, the Vice-President, the SECST, the SECDEF and the military chiefs.²⁸ While Washington realized that showing excessive support to Kim in a regime which was still non-civilian might be improper, Kim's special position, especially with regard to the normalization talks, was accepted. Thus, Kennedy directed that Kim be received by the SECST and the SECDEF.²⁹ This was an astonishing recognition of the importance of not only showing support for Park, but also for the talks. The on-going Cuban missile crisis practically precluded high officials from considering other business and in fact, it kept Rusk and McNamara from meeting Kim during the crisis.

Rusk, and Assistant SECST Harriman, however, met Kim on the 29th, the day after the resolution of the Cuban situation. Kim Chong Pil was able to have talks with an impressive list of high officials which included, in addition to Rusk and Harriman, William P. Bundy (State), Fowler Hamilton (AID), Luther Hodges (Commerce), Robert Kennedy (Attorney General), Gen. Maxwell Taylor (CJCS), Roger Hilsman (State) and Walt Rostow (State). The impression Kim made was mixed. On the one hand, his importance was recognized and his efforts to keep the U.S. informed on the latest progress in the talks, appreciated. On the other hand, his penchant for publicity grabbing and some out-of-line comments such as his allegation that the U.S. Government agreed with his views that a "transition to free and civilian government could not be made in one fell swoop," left a sour taste. A last minute admission by Berger that there was bad blood between him and Kim may also have influenced judgement on Kim's character.³⁰ When the political crisis in Seoul was seen as an obstacle to not only the elections, but the normalization talks, the U.S. made it clear to Park that he had to distance himself from Kim. It may not be an exaggeration to suggest that the U.S. forced Park to exile Kim.

The spring of 1963 saw a sharp escalation in the ROK power struggle and a raising of the stakes which not only worried U.S. policy makers, but forced them to take an active part in its resolution. U.S. objectives in Korea were clear: to bring

in a civilian government as quickly as possible and set Korea on the road to economic recovery and development. A vital necessary adjunct was to bring about the normalization treaty. Berger's gloomy report of 21 January stated that the unresolved leadership struggle threatened to divide the SCNR and the government. Berger also reported on a marathon 5 hour meeting in the SCNR to resolve the conflict where the anti-Kim Chong Pil elements made a "bold bid," but predicted that there would be drastic consequences whichever way the struggle went.³¹ This and other meetings convinced Park that the only way to maintain unity in the SCNR was to remove Kim as the chief organizer of the new government party. But the road to stability would be rocky. The CIA predicted at the end of January that factional conflicts were likely to continue as the military regime had by then lost popular support. It further predicted that the key to future political stability in Korea would rest with the armed forces, whose support was crucial for Park.³²

A renewed push was made by the State Department in February to resolve the talks. The controlling factor this time was the current session of the Japanese Diet which was due to end in May. State attempted to apply strong pressures on the Koreans to bring about a treaty in time for ratification by this Diet session. In a message to Seoul and Tokyo on 12 February, State wrote. "Department believes it [to be]

necessary to press hard on [the] Korean-Japanese negotiations despite political factors...Unless settlement [is] reached [by] Spring...prospects will be ...[a] serious detriment to Korean economic development...[we] believe no alternative [exists] but to press the issue." Along with this tough opening, the cable stated that the U.S. could not support the ROK's position on the "Rhee Line," a "defense" and fishing rights line between Japan and Korea and one of the main sources of disagreement, from a legal viewpoint.³³ Assistant SECST for Far East Harriman sent a personal message to Berger on the same day to "underline to you personally [the] importance which is placed here at [the] highest level [therefore the President] on ROK-Japanese settlement being achieved [by] this spring."³⁴

Under this torrent of pressure, Berger must have been slightly exasperated. His reply two days later pointed out that the political turmoil, revolving around the issues of Park's presidential candidacy and the election date, remained as intense as before. In Berger's opinion, it was "impractical to meet [the] original schedule for conclusion [of the] negotiations in March or April," and the alternative was to "recognize [the] basic problems now existing in [the] ROKG and draw [the] appropriate conclusion that [the] original time schedule cannot be adhered to until and unless [the] political crisis abates."³⁵

Park's announcements on February 18th and the 27th, which promised elections later that year, placated the opposition on the election issue. But Park would bring everything back to the starting point by an announcement on March 16th that he would call for an April referendum to extend military rule for another four years. Park's reason was to gain additional time to establish his and the government party's power base to insure an extended regime to guide Korea's future development. Park stated:

The present situation is too disordered and disturbed to hold elections and turn government power over to politicians who are not ready to take over the regime. We are too concerned about the nation's future to do so, because it would be the height of irresponsibility on the part of the revolutionary authorities. (Translation slightly modified from original)³⁶

However, the public outcry, especially by opposition politicians and the regional newspapers, threw the country into its most serious political crisis since the coup. The *Pusan Ilbo* stated in a March 18 editorial that the March 16 announcement was a "tragedy of this retarded country."³⁷ Opposition politicians expressed their profound shock and dismay. By March 19th, what progress was being made to resume the talks virtually came to a halt. While Kim Chong Pil was claiming that the extension of military rule would be good for Japan, the Japanese were extremely cautious and stated that

they were waiting for indications of a new U.S. policy toward the situation.³⁸

Park had made a move which was strongly opposed by the United States. Though he notified U.S. officials of his intent on the night of the 15th, he ignored U.S.'s request to hold off on the announcement until an appropriate American position could be formulated. After this "slap in the face," embassy officials urged Park and other key figures to abandon the new policy. Park continued to resist U.S. and public pressure and informed the U.S. embassy in early April that the date for the referendum would be announced the following day. Having exhausted "diplomatic" pressures, Berger resorted to a threat to withhold economic aid by telling Park that within an hour of such an announcement, the U.S. would in turn announce that U.S. support for Park "had been predicated on the fulfillment of pledges given to the Korean people and to us to hold elections and restore civil government. If these pledges were not fulfilled, we would be forced to reexamine our attitude toward Park's regime."³⁹ A few days later on 8 April, Park renounced the March 16 decree and delayed decision on the elections until September.

The American role in bringing this reversal seems to have been decisive. Indeed, a classified State Department history later claimed that "the return to civilian government was the direct result of U.S. diplomatic intervention."⁴⁰ However, a

more immediate assessment by Berger noted that "our strong stand was an important factor in this conclusion. but it was also determined by adverse action within Korea itself. Indeed I think [the] latter was [the] decisive reason for [the] decision to abandon [the] April referendum."⁴¹ Berger was probably incorrect in his assessment since Park had firm support from the ROK armed forces for the March 16 decree, therefore domestic pressures would not have mattered too greatly.⁴²

Whoever was responsible for the reversal, its importance was bringing a measure of relaxation of tension and stability to a volatile country. Berger's feelings were that the country was now focusing on economic issues and U.S. actions would be necessary to insure economic stability for the immediate future. Specifically, he urged immediate grant of additional PL 480 aid (U.S. program for food aid) of wheat and barley to help control a rice market wracked by rapid inflation. He concluded his report by stating that the ROKG was "intent on settling with [the] Japanese during these months and will go to some length to make concessions on fisheries." He further wrote that U.S. "support of Korea during this period might be helpful in persuading [the] Japanese to conclude with this govt."⁴³

No sooner were the political troubles over when two new issues surfaced. As foreseen by Berger, Korea suffered from serious food shortages in June. A series of unfortunate natural calamities had reduced the rice harvest the previous fall and

damaged a large portion of the spring barley and vegetable crop. In the predominantly vegetarian Korean diet, the potential for food riots which could topple the government was real. By 26 June, General Meloy estimated that food supplies might run out in Seoul and Pusan within two weeks. He recommended that "all possible steps be taken to expedite delivery of U.S. food."⁴⁴ Under the PL 480 program, 200,000 tons of additional barley was delivered when the spring crop had failed. Japan also responded by donating 40,000 tons of rice, wheat and barley.⁴⁵ While the dire consequences predicted by Gen. Meloy and later by the ROKG itself seemed to have been exaggerated, the embassy maintained a close watch on the situation, realizing that the crucial elections were rapidly approaching and that the country could ill afford a food crisis.⁴⁶

The other issue concerned U.S. aid levels for the coming fiscal year (1964). At a U.S.-ROK economic talks in Seoul in mid-March, the Koreans had requested a significant increase in economic assistance for the remainder of FY 63 and for FY 64.⁴⁷ There was a serious difference between the ROK request and the programmed levels. Instead of the \$130 million in support aid (SA) requested, only \$45 - 65 million was programmed. MAP and PL 480 levels remained adequate to fulfill needs.⁴⁸ Ambassador Berger made a trip back to Washington in late May 1963 to personally make the case for additional aid. While sympathetic,

the feeling at State and AID was that unless Korea embarked on a disciplined program for economic stabilization, most importantly, a sensible development plan and a balanced budget, additional aid would be misused and would only increase ROK dependence on the United States.⁴⁹ Berger met Kennedy on 31 May to discuss the aid issue and to brief the President on the current political situation, which was, according to Hilsman, "balanced on a knife edge."⁵⁰ The option to cut the ROK military and reduce MAP aid to boost economic aid was still very much alive in the White House. But the developing Buddhist crisis in Vietnam renewed concerns over that country and diverted attention to Southeast Asia.

In June 63, the embassy in Saigon and the CIA were sending pessimistic reports of the situation in Vietnam although MACV continued to report optimistically. Kennedy would soon realize that the Vietnam situation was far worse than he had ever imagined. His actions for the following months were cautious, but indicated a reluctance to "give up" Vietnam. He started by replacing Nolting with Henry Cabot Lodge as the ambassador and took steps which would lead to Diem's downfall in November.⁵¹

No progress was being made in the Japan-ROK normalization talks as Japan waited for the Korean political situation to stabilize. The approaching Korean elections now became the focus for a waiting game. Japan did not want to settle

substantial treaty issues with Korea until the new government was securely in power.

¹ PP 2:151.

² Good general coverage of the deceptive reporting of this period can be found in Krepinevich, *Army*, pp. 56-99; Halberstam, *The Best and the Brightest*, pp. 179-188, 200-212 (hereafter referred to as *Brightest*); Herring, *Longest War*, pp. 86-94. Also, as yet unfinished PhD dissertation (George Washington Univ) by John M. Newman, Jr., attempts to reconstruct a day by day account of the 61-63 period and the deception of the President which had taken place using previously unavailable sources.

³ Hilsman, *Nation*, pp. 453-467; Herring, *Longest War*, p. 93; PP 2:717-725.

⁴ Hilsman, *Nation*, pp. 17-62; Cooper, Chester L., *The Lost Crusade: America in Vietnam*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1970), pp. 254-283 (hereafter referred to as *Crusade*).

⁵ Halberstam, *Brightest*, pp. 209-212.

⁶ One of the most famous battles of the Vietnam War, every critical study of the War contains an account it. Probably the most detailed account of the debacle at Ap Bac is in Neil Sheehan's, *A Bright Shining Lie* (New York: Random House, 1988) pp. 203-265. Short critical account in Krepinevich, *Army*, pp. 78-80 and a policymaking perspective in Hilsman, *Nation*, pp. 447-449.

⁷ Krepinevich, *Army*, p. 86.

⁸ Cooper, *Crusade*, pp. 199-220; Hilsman, *Nation*, pp. 514-523.

⁹ Halberstam, *Brightest*, p. 253.

¹⁰ This is a speculative issue. However, based on accounts by officials in the Kennedy years, I am inclined to believe that Kennedy would have made an overture for accommodating communist China. See Rusk, *As I Saw It*, p. 284 and Oral History, JFK Library: Bundy, *Manuscript*, p. 3-6; Hilsman, *Nation*, p. 347. An opposing view, interpreting Kennedy's China policy as one designed to further aggravate the Sino-Soviet split by distancing China and accommodating the Soviets is given in a recent book by Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948-1972*, (Stanford: Stanford Univ Press, 1990) (hereafter referred to as *Friends*).

¹¹ Hilsman, *Nation*, p. 338.

¹² Press conference, August 1, 1963. Quote in *Ibid*, p. 339.

- 13 Deptel 40(Seoul)/90(Tokyo). 13 Jul 62. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 14 Deptel 80(Seoul). 27 Jul 62. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 15 Seoul Embtel 88. 30 Jul 62. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 16 Memo. Komer to Mike (Forrestal). 31 Jul 62. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 17 The transfer of MAP funded portions of the ROK military budget to the ROK national budget was initiated to gradually wean the ROK military from U.S. support. The issue was highly contentious in Korea, because it seemed to represent not only a weakening of U.S. financial support when Korea could ill afford to pay, but a declining U.S. resolve to protect and defend Korea from communist aggression.
- 18 COMUSFK msg to CJCS #0347. 19 Jan 62. NSF. Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- 19 Seoul Embtel 864. 12 Jan 62. NSF. Country. Box 128. JFK Library.
- 20 Memo. Brubeck to McGeorge Bundy. 22 Aug 62. NSF. Country. Box 127; Letters. Kennedy to Park. 23 Aug 62 and Kennedy to Ikeda. 23 Aug 62. POF. Country. Box 120.
- 21 Administrative History. Dept of State, Jan 69: Chapter 7, Section F, Part 4. LBJ Library (hereafter formatted as AHDS 7:F4).
- 22 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 3. No. 284 (21 Oct 62) thru No. 290 (28 Oct 62).
- 23 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 3. No. 284 (21 Oct 62). Item 4 (*Chosun Ilbo*. 21 Oct 62).
- 24 *Press Translations*. Vol. 3. No. 290 (28 Oct 62). Item 3 (*Kyonghyang Sinmun*. 27 Oct 62).
- 25 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 252.
- 26 Ltr. Van Fleet to Pres. 16 Oct 62. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 27 Seoul Embtel 375. 17 Oct 62. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.

- 28 Deptel 321(Seoul). 16 Oct 62. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 29 Ltr. McGeorge Bundy to Gen Van Fleet. 22 Oct 62. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 30 Seoul Airgram A-257. 23 Oct 62. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 31 Seoul Embtel 511. 21 Jan 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 32 CIA Current Intelligence Memo #0478/63: *The South Korean Crisis*. 25 Jan 63. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 33 Deptel 479(Seoul)/1489(Tokyo). 12 Feb 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 34 Deptel 480(Seoul). 12 Feb 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 35 Seoul Embtel. 564. 14 Feb 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 36 Seoul Embtel 649. 16 Mar 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 37 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 4. No. 64 (17 Mar 63). Item 28 (*Hanguk Ilbo*, 17 Mar 63) and Vol. 4. No. 65 (19 Mar 63). Item 34 (*Pusan Ilbo*, 18 Mar 63).
- 38 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 4. No. 65 (19 Mar 63). Item 4 (*Dong A Ilbo*, 18 Mar 63) and Vol. 4. No. 66 (20 Mar 63). Item 3 (*Kyonghyang Sinmun*, 19 Mar 63).
- 39 AHSD 7:F1a. LBJ Library .
- 40 *Ibid.*
- 41 Seoul Embtel 838. 29 Apr 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 42 Seoul Embtel 686. 22 Mar 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 43 Seoul Embtel 838. 29 Apr 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 44 CINCUNC msg to JCS. 26 Jun 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.

- 45 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 252.
- 46 Seoul Embtel 90. 22 Jul 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 47 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol.4. No. 65 (19 Mar 63). Item 38 (*Dong A Ilbo*. 15 Mar 63).
- 48 Memo. McGeorge Bundy to Pres. 31 May 63. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 49 AHDS 7:F2b. LBJ Library.
- 50 Memo. McGeorge Bundy to Pres. 31 May 63. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 51 Halberstam. *Brightest*. pp. 251-260.

CHAPTER 4

May 1963 - April 1964 Vietnam Crisis and a New American President

Overview

The latter half of 1963 was a period dominated by political upheavals and changes in the U.S., Vietnam and Korea. By spring of 1964, with the sobering reality of a war sliding downhill on a steeper gradient than was ever imagined possible, a contingency withdrawal plan would be scrapped. A new President would approve a policy in Vietnam which would firmly commit the U.S. to a military victory. This in turn set the stage for the beginning of a concerted and sustained effort to internationalize the war by obtaining Free World contributions. One of the first countries to be asked and to respond to the new crusade was South Korea.

The Buddhist crisis of May quickly spread into a national movement of protest against the oppressive regime of Diem and his brother-in-law and nemesis, Nhu. The crisis escalated into a coup silently supported by the United States. But the hoped for political stability would not materialize as 1964 would witness the greatest period of political instability in Vietnam. Almost like clockwork, no fewer than six changes of

Footnotes begin on page 96.

government would take place in 1964. Not until three more changes had taken place in the first half of 1965 would President Thieu and Prime Minister Ky provide a semblance of political stability to South Vietnam.

The normalization talks between Japan and Korea remained stalled until the long promised elections were held in the fall of 1963. A week before Park's election as President in late October, Kim Chong Pil returned from exile in the U.S. to head the Democratic Republican Party (DRP), the newly organized government party. The new civilian regime reassured Japan since Park and Kim represented continuity and firm authority. The talks resumed in January.

U.S. Withdrawal Plan

In mid-1962, the Vietnam situation seemed optimistic and almost ebullient. The increased American advisory effort coupled with the strategic hamlets program seemed to be making real progress in defeating the Vietcong insurgency. At an Honolulu SECDEF conference (the sixth) in July of 1962, McNamara set in motion a contingency withdrawal plan from Vietnam under instruction from Kennedy. This "Comprehensive Plan for South Vietnam" (CPSVN) had the following two objectives:

- (1) to draw down U.S. military personnel then engaged in advisory, training, and support efforts from a FY 64 peak of 12,000 to a FY 68 bottoming out of 1,500 (just HQ, MAAG [Military Assistance and Advisory Group]); and (2) to

reduce MAP from a FY 64 peak of \$180 million to a FY 69 base of \$40.8 million. South Vietnamese forces were to be trained to perform all the functions then being carried out by U.S. personnel.¹

It was the original "Vietnamization" plan, long before President Nixon implemented his own in 1969. When the seventh SECDEF Honolulu Conference convened on May 6, 1963, just three days before the Buddhist crisis would erupt, the plan was presented to McNamara for approval. One of the Vietnam War's many ironies took place as McNamara disapproved the CPSVN as being too costly in MAP assistance and too slow in the planned withdrawal of U.S. forces.² It was at this meeting that General Harkins presented the SECDEF with reams of statistical data to demonstrate how well the war was going along with a prediction that the war could be won by "Christmas."³ Given such optimism, which was supported by the CIA in a cautious estimate in April, McNamara wanted a cheaper and quicker version of CPSVN.⁴ He also instructed the JCS to immediately plan for a withdrawal of 1000 men by the end of 1963.

The developing political crisis in Vietnam reached a peak on August 20th when Diem declared martial law and ordered attacks on Buddhist pagodas. Within days, the American attitude toward Diem and its Vietnam policy changed. The situation had greater impact in Washington, because Diem had promised the departing Ambassador Nolting that attacks against the Buddhists would stop.⁵ In a controversial August 24 cable to the new Ambassador, Lodge, continued American support was to be

predicated on the removal of Nhu. The Vietnamese Army generals, who seemed ready to stage a coup, were to be told that the U.S. was prepared to cut economic and military aid if Nhu was not removed.⁶ The generals understood the message for what it was, a tacit approval for a coup.

There was also concern that the political upheaval would have a detrimental impact on the military effort. In a flurry of NSC and White House meetings in September, two Presidential fact-finding missions were sent to Vietnam. The first, by General Krulak, the head of the Far East section on the staff of the Joint Chiefs, and Joseph A. Mendenhall, head of the planning office in the State Department's Bureau of Far Eastern Affairs, produced a curious result which led Kennedy to remark, "you two did visit the same country, didn't you?" Krulak reported that the war was being won and continuation of the present policies in support of Diem would insure victory. Mendenhall presented a totally opposite view of the situation and concluded that the war could not be won with Diem.⁷ Kennedy was inclined to accept Mendenhall's report. A week earlier, in a television interview with Walter Cronkite, he stated that changes in policy and personnel were needed in South Vietnam before the situation could improve.⁸

In the wake of an NSC decision to apply escalatory pressures on Diem for reforms, McNamara and General Taylor departed on a ten day trip for yet another fact-finding tour.

Their report on 2 October marked for the first time the Pentagon's recognition that the political dimension of the war might be more important than the military dimension. Hilsman, who was intimately involved with the Vietnam policy debate as the Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs and a resident expert on counter-insurgency, later wrote, "McNamara and Taylor had come a long way in recognizing that political factors were more important in Vietnam than they had been willing to admit, but they had not come far enough to recognize that political factors were fundamental and overriding."⁹

The McNamara-Taylor report, which was accepted by Kennedy and codified into NSAM 263, was a compromise between the "Krulak" camp and the "Mendenhall" camp. The war was going well, but political changes were needed to insure success and the way to do it was to squeeze Diem by selectively suspending aid. In addition, it stated that the Vietnamization of the war could be completed by the end of 1965 and recommended the public announcement of the 1,000-man withdrawal plan as the first stage in a long-term withdrawal plan.¹⁰ NSAM 263, in effect, set in motion the CPSVN, although a new version was still uncompleted and would not be until early December.

Then, disturbing indications started to appear, pointing to a military situation far worse than what McNamara, Taylor, Krulak and others had been led to believe. State Department's Intelligence and Research Bureau produced a report on October

22nd which reanalyzed MACV's statistics and concluded that the trend was not only downhill, but had been so since July. There was an immediate backlash from the Pentagon at this "misuse" of proprietary information and State Department's intrusion into Pentagon's military intelligence territory. But the full spectrum of the true military and pacification situation was revealed in the aftermath of the coup in Saigon on 1 November. One statistical sham after another was discovered. The Vietnamese had been feeding doctored statistics to assuage the expectations of MACV, which, in turn, had accepted them without challenge. These statistics in turn were sent to Washington as facts. As one Vietnamese general exclaimed to an American, "*Ah. les statistiques!* Your Secretary of Defense loves statistics. We Vietnamese can give him all he wants. If you want them to go up, they will go up. If you want them to go down, they will go down."¹¹

On the Road to Direct Combat in Vietnam

One of Johnson's first act as President had been to approve NSAM 273 on 26 November, which reaffirmed continued U.S. support for Vietnam. Johnson described this action in his memoir as a continuation of Kennedy's policies.¹² But, as Halberstam and William Bundy pointed out later, it was also an indication of Johnson's personal determination not to "lose" Vietnam, to commit the U.S. to a far greater degree than the

flexible approach taken by Kennedy in September.¹³ The new CPSVN was submitted by CINCPAC (Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Command: the immediate superior command over MACV) to JCS on 5 December. A week later, however, a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) memorandum to McNamara reported that the Vietcong had actually improved combat effectiveness and force posture in 1963.¹⁴ This directly contradicted a glowing assessment of the progress of the war between 1960 and 1963 prepared by General Krulak.¹⁵

A concerned SECDEF made another fact-finding trip in late December. McNamara's report to the President on 21 December was in direct contrast to his October findings. He summarized the overall situation as "very disturbing," and that "Current trends, unless reversed in the next 2-3 months, will lead to neutralization at best and more likely to a Communist-controlled state." On the Vietcong, he observed that their "progress has been great during the period since the coup, with my best guess being that the situation has in fact been deteriorating in the countryside since July to a far greater extent than we realized because of our undue dependence on distorted Vietnamese reporting." He concluded, "We should watch the situation very carefully, running scared, hoping for the best, but preparing for more forceful moves if the situation does not show early signs of improvement."¹⁶

A month later, a second coup took place in Saigon, marking the first of six changes of government in 1964. A junta headed by General Khanh replaced General Minh's military regime. The political turbulence since fall of 1963 provided a scapegoat to MACV as it reported in early February that, while the tempo of South Vietnamese operations was good, the poor political situation was reflected by the reduction of government controlled areas and a rise in Vietcong activity.¹⁷

In February, skeptical of progress reports from MACV, the CIA despatched its own team to Vietnam and published a far more pessimistic estimate.¹⁸ By the time the eighth SECDEF Honolulu Conference was held on 6 March, there was a consensus that the military situation was rapidly deteriorating. McNamara immediately went to Vietnam for a week long trip to confirm the situation for himself. His report and recommendations to the President on 16 March, subsequently embodied in NSAM 288 the following day, established the new policy.

NSAM 288 was a much more sweeping statement of support and commitment to Vietnam than any made before and set the stage for further U.S. escalation. It called for a clear statement and action of support for the Khanh government by increasing military and economic aid. While the U.S. military advisory effort would only be modestly increased, NSAM 288 directed the JCS to begin planning a bombing campaign against North Vietnam, something the JCS had been calling for since February.¹⁹ CPSVN

was formally terminated on 27 March "to make it clear that we fully support" the government of Vietnam.²⁰ NSAM 288 represented the first clear Johnson policy for Vietnam, an expression of his firm commitment.²¹

Soon thereafter, Johnson initiated the "Free World Assistance Program," more popularly known as the "More Flags" program, through a press conference on 23 April. The official State Department history later characterized the program as a "concerted diplomatic effort in 1964 to enlist economic assistance from other free world nations in the Viet-Nam effort."²² However, there was also a clear call for military assistance as well. At the time, the only other nation with a military presence was Australia, which had maintained a small contingent of jungle warfare specialists as training advisors since 1962.²³ New Zealand had been discussing military assistance with MACV since June of 1963, interested in sending representative army and naval elements to gain experience.²⁴ Korea would be formally requested to send assistance in April, but we shall see that discussions and negotiations with the Johnson administration probably began earlier.

U.S.-ROK Relations: Elections At Last

Korea was not a priority issue in the last months of the Kennedy administration. The summer of 1963 was occupied by the growing political crisis in Vietnam and the climax of Kennedy's

detente with the Soviet Union. The American University speech and a triumphant visit to Berlin marked June while July saw the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT). The LTBT was, in the words of Dean Rusk, "what President Kennedy felt was his proudest achievement."²⁵ The Sino-Soviet dispute had by now become a major issue. As one scholar wrote recently, the immediate policy in the Kennedy administration was to aggravate the split and to attempt to prevent China from obtaining a nuclear weapon. The LTBT "sparked an explosion, exactly as the administration wanted: it split the Sino-Soviet rift wide open."²⁶

In early July, planning had begun on a Presidential trip through Asia sometime between fall of 1963 and spring of 1965. In a memorandum discussing various options of the trip, Hilsman, the recently appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, did not include Korea in the itinerary. The overriding issue was to further isolate China and "consolidate the Pacific arena" with a "dramatic affirmation of America's presence and commitment."²⁷ Significantly, with the ROK presidential elections concluded and the National Assembly elections only two weeks away, Hilsman wrote on 11 November that the inclusion of Korea on the itinerary was "less desirable," but if it could assist in accelerating the process for concluding a Japan-ROK Treaty, then it would be worth consideration.²⁸ This was entirely in

line with Kennedy's own sense of priority with regard to Korea.

When the newly appointed ROK Ambassador Kim Chung Yul presented his credentials on 17 June, Kennedy's conversation was dominated by the normalization issue. Kennedy also enquired, in line with the long standing option generated by the Korea Task Force in 1961, whether "it might be possible to reduce the ROK military forces."²⁹ U.S. policy priority on Korea remained centered on economic development and Vietnam was even less of a common issue compared to its prominence in the Kennedy-Park talks in November 1961.

Korean factional struggles remained intense up until the fall elections. Ambassador Berger reported in September that the Park faction dominated and seemed to be consolidating its position while the opposition showed signs of division. His recommendations on U.S. policy was to maintain a hands-off attitude while constantly emphasizing the need for free discussions and fair elections. Berger further recommended that the U.S. increasingly tie American economic aid with improvements shown through Korean economic reforms.³⁰

The food crisis of June seemed exaggerated by late July. Both Berger and Killen agreed that the food situation was not so much a problem of supply as misguided policy concerning prices which were too low and unrestricted diversion of grain for alcoholic beverage production. Still, they would maintain

close watch on the situation. As Berger told the Koreans, "[the] U.S. would not let [the] people of Korea starve."³¹

By October, the American focus in Korea was on the coming elections. The CIA produced a special classified report which predicted a Park victory as the president, but a more problematic result in the National Assembly (NA) elections for the DRP.³² State's Intelligence and Research Bureau, just one week before the NA elections, forecast that the opposition, though divided, held the advantage. It noted that the transition from a military to a civilian government would be a difficult crossing likely to be marked by "bitter struggles" focusing on relationship with Japan between the executive and the legislature.³³ It was then a surprised Berger who cabled Washington on 27 November that the "DRP showing has surprised all observers and upset all forecasts." His preliminary conclusion was that the elections had been fair. The DRP candidates, in many cases, won with a minority of votes due to the division of the opposition.³⁴

Japan-Korea Talks

Along with the elections came renewed pressures from the U.S. to get the normalization talks back on track. The first opportunity to apply pressure came when both Ikeda and Park came to Washington for Kennedy's funeral. Johnson saw Park, Foreign Minister Kim Yong Shik and Ambassador Kim on 25

November and expressed his pleasure that Korea had returned to civilian rule as had been promised and hoped "that the completion of elections in both Japan and Korea would set the stage for a rapid and successful completion of the negotiations."³⁵ The next day, Rusk met Ikeda, Foreign Minister Ohira and Ambassador Takeuchi. After an extended discussion covering U.S.-Japan relations, the conversation turned to the normalization talks. Rusk ventured to provide some specific suggestions concerning the still intractable fisheries problem. Ohira responded to Rusk's overtures by saying that the problem was "not as difficult as the claims issue," and that the majority of the Japanese people were in favor of normalization. "The problem was on the other side." Ohira thought that if Park's DRP gained an assembly majority in the elections just three days away, "the remaining problems could be solved."³⁶ Robert Kennedy's swing through Japan and Korea reinforced the message that the normalization problem was a priority issue with the United States.³⁷ Following the third U.S.-Japan economic summit held in Japan on January 27 and 28, 1964, Rusk proceeded to Seoul to emphasize yet one more time how seriously the U.S. wanted to see the normalization talks renewed.³⁸ The talks began on the same day, centering primarily on the fisheries dispute.

In February, Rusk called in the two ambassadors from Japan and Korea and asked them to convey to their respective

governments his hope that a treaty could be negotiated in time for ratification before the end of the current Diet session.³⁹ Under such relentless American pressure and Korea's own sense of urgency, the talks were well under way by February 1964. A trip to Japan, Taiwan and Vietnam was scheduled for Kim Chong Pil in March with the main mission being talks in Japan to expedite the settlement.⁴⁰ Kim and Ohira were able to agree that May 1964 would be the target for concluding the negotiations.⁴¹

It was not a coincidence that U.S.-ROK Status of Forces negotiations on February 14th dealt with the core issues of criminal jurisdiction, labor articles and claims articles.⁴² While no evidence exists that the SOFA negotiations were tied to progress in the talks or the troops for Vietnam issue, it is intriguing to note that the final breakthrough was made in mid-1965, concurrently with the signing of the treaty and a firm indication from Park that a division of ROK troops could be sent to Vietnam.

Despite Kim Chong Pil's promise, the negotiations were not concluded by May. March marked the beginning of a massive and organized anti-treaty protest movement in Korea. It involved students, politicians and academics from all over the country. By the end of March, Park was forced to resort to using troops for riot control, recall Kim from Tokyo and suspend the talks.

It was the greatest mass protest movement since the revolution of April 1960 which had ousted Syngman Rhee.

While the vagaries of the treaty negotiations exasperated all, grounds were being laid quietly for the first ROK deployment to Vietnam. Although a formal request was not received until after Johnson's "More Flags" speech of 23 April, Korea's rapid response points to an earlier preparation. In all probability, although no direct evidence has been found, Kim Chong Pil's trip to Vietnam in mid-March makes sense only in this context. The National Assembly's official history notes that he had a high level meeting with General Minh, the Prime Minister.⁴³

This was not the first trip to Vietnam for Kim. As noted earlier, he had made a trip in early 1962 in the wake of a discussion involving the possibility of Korean involvement in the war between Park and Kennedy in late 1961. The trip itself was not unusual, but the timing could not have been more auspicious. On the very day Kim met Minh, McNamara had just returned from a week long visit to Vietnam with the findings and recommendations which were adopted *in toto* as NSAM 288. Undoubtedly, as the closest confidant of Park, Kim was maintaining the closest possible watch on American policies and actions in Vietnam.

The incompletely declassified records of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations contain no evidence of any deep and

hidden contacts and discussions. But, one is led to wonder at the remarkable timing exhibited by Kim's visits in 1962 and 1964 in the context of U.S. policy deliberations and decisions on Vietnam. The remaining years of the Vietnam War were marked by a parallel level of troop commitments which made Korea the only significant non-American contributor of troops, despite significant political oppositions at home.

Park's priority was economic development, but political opposition in Korea and the troubling decline in American support for the Korean military required reprioritization. His immediate concern became insuring military security and to cement relations with the United States. Fulfillment of these goals would establish a firm foundation for normalizing relations with Japan and the opening of the road to economic development. In addition, insuring the security and internal stability of Korea could gain stronger popular support for his regime and his development plans.

Park's grand plan did not necessarily separate the direct relationship between security and economic growth. Greater U.S. assistance for the ROK military meant more funds would be available for economic development. Security could also create an atmosphere of confidence for domestic and international sources of capital, especially Japan, leading to their greater willingness to invest in development projects in Korea. Finally, guaranteed security, commitment to economic growth.

and a significant military partnership with the U.S. in Vietnam could define a new regional political and economic role for Park and Korea.

Park's quest for national security, economic prosperity and a new world role for Korea, if necessary to be pursued in that order, provided the driving rationale to force the Vietnam and the Treaty issues on a reluctant nation.

- 1 PP 2:160.
- 2 *Ibid.* p. 160.
- 3 Krepinevich. *Army*. p. 86.
- 4 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) 53-63, 17 April 63, excerpt in PP 2:725-6; author in possession of the full report. Among the conclusions, the report states "We believe that Communist progress has been blunted and that the situation is improving," but later caveats that "we do not believe that it is possible at this time to project the future course of the war with any confidence," that "no quick and easy end to the war is in sight" and "the situation remains fragile" (pp. 1-2). It must be noted at this time that throughout the war, the CIA who has responsibility for the NIE/SNIE, produced the most accurate and realistic estimates. However, their estimates were subsumed by MACV's which were deemed more accurate, because it was "on the scene."
- 5 Cooper. *Crusade*. p. 211.
- 6 Hilsman. *Nation*. pp. 483-494; PP 2:211. 234-235.
- 7 Hilsman. *Nation*. pp. 501-502; PP 2:243-245.
- 8 Hilsman dubbed the Kennedy interview "action forcing," because Kennedy had made a policy decision on mass media before presenting it to his advisors. See Hilsman. *Nation*. p. 497.
- 9 *Ibid.* p. 510.
- 10 PP 2:751-756.
- 11 Quote in Hilsman. *Nation*. p. 523.
- 12 Johnson, Lyndon B., *The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969*. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), p. 45 (hereafter referred to as *Vantage*).
- 13 Halberstam quotes Johnson as saying, "I am not going to lose Vietnam...I am not going to be the President who saw Southeast Asia go the way China went." (*Brightest*, p. 298); Bundy cites Johnson's report after a crash trip to Southeast Asia as Vice President in May 1961 as an indication of how committed he was even then to preventing Communist aggression in the region. (*Manuscript*, 3-37 to 3-41); Finally, in a demonstration of how clearly Johnson conveyed his determination, the JCS unambiguously started off a January 64 memorandum on Vietnam to the President by writing, "National

Security Action Memorandum No. 273 makes clear the resolve of the President to ensure victory over the externally directed and supported communist insurgency in South Vietnam" (PP 3:496).

¹⁴ PP 2:192.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ PP 3:494-496.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 39-41.

¹⁸ PP 2:194.

¹⁹ PP 2:195-196; PP 3:9; Herring. *Longest War*. pp. 116-117; Halberstam. *Brightest*. pp. 352-355; Cooper. *Crusade*. pp. 231-232.

²⁰ PP 3:197-198.

²¹ Johnson later played down the significance of his decision in March of 1964. He wrote. "I approved the twelve actions on the McNamara list on March 17 and instructed the Executive departments to carry them out, but rejected proposals to do more than that" (Johnson. *Vantage*. p. 67). A key memembr of the NSC who dealt with Vietnam wrote. "Now [with the decision on NSAM 288] there was a renewed committment and with it a yet more closely-related identification of American prestige with the outcome of the struggle" (Cooper. *Crusade*. p. 232).

²² AHSD 8:E1, LBJ Library.

²³ Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 88.

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 104-105.

²⁵ Rusk. *As I Saw It*. p. 259.

²⁶ Chang. *Friends*. p. 249.

²⁷ Memo. Hilsman to Forrestal, 8 July 63. p. 2. Hilsman Papers. Box 5, JFK Library.

²⁸ Memo. Hilsman to McGB and Forrestal. 11 Nov 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.

²⁹ Memcon. JFK and Amb. Kim. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.

- 30 Seoul Embtel 277. 2 Sep 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 31 Seoul Embtel 90. 22 Jul 63. NSF. Country. Box 129. JFK Library.
- 32 CIA Special Report. "Background for Elections in South Korea." 11 Oct 63. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 33 Memo. Denny to Rusk. "The Next Few Months in Korea." 19 Nov 63. NSF. Country. Box 127. JFK Library.
- 34 Seoul Embtel 741. 27 Nov 63. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 35 Memcon. Johnson. Hilsman. Park. Foreign Minister Kim. Amb. Kim. 25 Nov 63. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 36 Memcon. Rusk. Barnett. Ikeda. Ohira. Takeuchi. 26 Nov 63. NSF. Country. Box 250. LBJ Library.
- 37 Republic of Korea, National Assembly. *Gukhoe Sa: Jae 4.5.6 Dae Gukhoe (History of the National Assembly: The 4th. 5th and 6th National Assembly)* (Seoul: ROK National Assembly. 1971). p. 569 (hereafter referred to as *NA History*).
- 38 *Ibid*: Kim, Kwan Bong. *The Korea-Japan Treaty Crisis and the Instability of the Korean Political System* (New York: Praeger. 1971). p. 81 (hereafter referred to as *Treaty*).
- 39 AHSD 7:F3, LBJ Library.
- 40 *NA History*. p. 593.
- 41 Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 109-110.
- 42 AHSD 7:F4, LBJ Library.
- 43 *NA History*. p. 593.

Chapter 5

March 1964 - October 1964 Coming Storm in Vietnam and the First ROK Deployment Stalled Treaty Talks

Overview

The new U.S. policy in Vietnam as set forth by NSAM 288 was a genuine effort to instill political stability in Vietnam and bring the war onto a winning path. Military contingencies and political measures for Vietnam continued to be debated and planned through the summer of 1964. The domestic political situation in South Vietnam remained fragile. In the midst of these developments, the still controversial Tonkin Gulf incident occurred and marked the start of a new level of U.S. resolve and involvement. Even with a "blank check" from Congress to escalate the war, Johnson held off on major new decisions on Vietnam until after his reelection in November. He was even more concerned with the potential impact of the war on his "Great Society" program.¹

The middle months in 1964 marked the formal recognition of Japan as a legitimate world economic power by the international community. In April, Japan was able to join the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and become a member of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).² The staging of

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the Tokyo Olympics marked the capstone to a dizzying year of international exposure and prestige. The reelection of Ikeda by the LDP as Prime Minister in July insured continuity for domestic and foreign policies. It was an explicit mark of approval by the Japanese public for the success of Ikeda's economic policies which produced remarkable growth in 1963 and 1964 (GNP growth of 12.8 and 13.7 percent, respectively).³

Japanese relations with the U.S. remained positive even as America was trying to readjust to a new Japan. A major State Department policy review in June concluded that it would be to the U.S.'s advantage to "live" with a Japan which was becoming richer and independent, and to accord it "a greater voice in East Asian and world policy decisions."⁴ The appointment in August of the "pleasant, sensible and efficient" General Watson as the new High Commissioner of Okinawa, replacing the vitriolic General Caraway, resulted in a "tremendous improvement" in dealing with the Okinawa issue. When the next joint Consultative Committee meeting was held in September, it was marked by a new level of understanding and the first full and unequivocal implementation of the spirit of the Kennedy policy.⁵

In contrast to Japan's stability, the massive anti-Treaty movement rocked Korea for most of 1964. By summer, martial law was declared and Kim Chong Pil was sent off on a second exile amidst intense controversies concerning charges of personal

corruption and sellout to the Japanese by conducting what the demonstrators called "humiliating diplomacy."⁶ Treaty negotiations with Japan did not resume until December. By then, the regional political milieu had changed considerably accompanied by a renewed intensification of U.S. pressure on both countries. Ikeda's resignation in November brought the much more aggressive Sato in as the new Prime Minister. A new U.S. ambassador, Winthrop Brown, arrived in August to replace Berger. Berger had become a less than effective U.S. emissary due to his falling out with Kim Chong Pil. Further, the Vietnam War became much more palpable as the first Korean troops (non-combat) were deployed in September.

Vietnam Situation

One of the major goals of NSAM 288 was to inject some semblance of stability into South Vietnam's domestic political situation. It committed the U.S. to supporting General Khanh's regime and rebuilding the South Vietnamese government's control over the countryside. Almost immediately, Khanh became more of a problem rather than a solution. His calls for "marching north" in May required visits by McNamara and Rusk to convey to him, in no uncertain terms, that the U.S. had no intention of allowing South Vietnam "fall" to the Communists. At the same time, Khanh was told, the U.S. would not support any military venture into North Vietnam.⁷

The military problems precipitated a Honolulu Conference in June attended by the principal policy makers in the State and Defense Departments.⁸ They agreed that the point of departure for policy considerations was the unacceptability of Hanoi or Beijing overrunning Southeast Asia. Concerned with the possibility of China entering the conflict, the military options decided on were: (1) to seek international and domestic support for wider U.S. actions; and, (2) to begin planning for the possible commitment of up to seven U.S. divisions and the calling up of the reserves.⁹ While actual increase decided on the U.S. advisory force was modest, planning for air attacks was given additional impetus. This was due to calls for air attacks by Ambassador Lodge and the newly appointed MACV commander, General Westmoreland, to provide a dramatic gesture of "victory" to galvanize the Vietnamese military into greater action.¹⁰

In July, General Taylor replaced Lodge as the ambassador in South Vietnam. Taylor was "initiated" into the growing sentiment among Khanh and his associates to incite the U.S. into attacking North Vietnam with airpower. Taylor was authorized to reveal that air attack contingencies were, in fact, under planning without giving any indications that they remained only contingencies.¹¹ In the same month, South Vietnam began conducting the 34A commando operations against North Vietnam in a joint program with the United States.

Shortly thereafter, the Tonkin Gulf incident resulted in the first of a series of U.S. reprisal air attacks against North Vietnamese targets. But Johnson remained cautious. While Ambassador Taylor and the JCS called for a sustained air campaign, Johnson decided in September to limit air strikes on a "tit-for-tat" basis. The rationale was more to bolster the Vietnamese confidence than to extract vengeance.¹²

In October, CIA estimates noted continued deterioration of South Vietnamese morale and effectiveness. The installation of a civilian government under Prime Minister Huong with a new constitution in late October gave cause for renewed optimism. It did not mean that Khanh was now out of the politics for he remained the principal behind-the-scenes manipulator, but it was a positive sign of improvement and possible political stability.¹³ On 1 November, the Vietcong attacked the U.S. airbase at Bien Hoa and destroyed a number of recently stationed bombers and killed four Americans. As William P. Bundy wrote later, "[the Vietcong] hit the most embarrassing target at the most embarrassing time and with the most embarrassing results." It was a stark signal to the U.S. and South Vietnam that they might be losing.¹⁴ Johnson hesitated and decided not to retaliate tit-for-tat as called for by NSAM 288. While Bundy characterized Johnson's loss of heart as "statesmanship," the inescapable conclusion is that it was a

political decision. The Presidential election was only two days away.

Japan-Korea Talks

Kim Chong Pil's visit to Tokyo in March resulted in breakthrough progress. In meetings with Prime Minister Ikeda and Foreign Minister Ohira on 23 and 24 March, a timetable was adopted which called for concluding the Treaty by the end of May.¹⁵ Immediately, students in Seoul took to the streets to demonstrate against the "humiliating diplomacy" and "Japanese penetration" of Korea.¹⁶ There was a strong suspicion of a sellout by the Park regime. A statement by Ono Banboku, LDP's vice president, that his relationship with Park was a paternal one, inflamed the protestors even further.¹⁷ The protests quickly spread nationwide and included university and high school students.¹⁸

Earlier in March, opposition Assemblymen organized the Struggling Committee of People Against the Humiliating Diplomacy with Japan (Struggling Committee) to coordinate legal and popular opposition more effectively. They were soon joined by non-political leaders of various backgrounds. Their stumping between 15 and 21 March, calling for the immediate suspension of all negotiations, attracted over 120,000 people.¹⁹ By 26 March, Park resorted to using troops to defend the presidential compound (Blue House) and the Capitol. After securing the

concurrence of the CINUNC (Commander-in-Chief, UN Command). 1,500 troops were deployed.²⁰ However, Park was not ready to use violence to put down the demonstrations. Instead, he gave in by first making a direct appeal to the students and when that didn't work, by recalling Kim Chong Pil from Tokyo and suspending the talks on 31 March.²¹

Opposition in Japan was heating up as well. The Socialist Party (JSP) and left-wing elements were opposed to what they considered a "prelude to an anticommunist alliance among Taiwan, South Korea, and Japan and that it would impede the unification of North and South Korea." With a party platform which called for a "people's movement" against the normalization, the JSP was willing to mobilize both Diet politicians and citizens against the treaty. However, truly worrisome and serious protests would not come until 1965 with the convening of a special ratification session of the Diet after the treaty was signed.²²

Washington was alarmed and took measures in April to try to restart the talks. The first was taken by Admiral Felt, the CINCPAC, who called on Park and ROK Defense Minister Kim Sung Eun on 5 April. Their conversation was dominated by the treaty issue, and although Felt was not in a position to "pressure" the Koreans, his visit and obvious interest conveyed the level of American interest in getting the talks started again.²³ Attendance at General MacArthur's funeral by a delegation of

Assemblymen led by Prime Minister Choi Doo Sun afforded Rusk the opportunity to personally impress upon political leaders from the DRP and opposition parties the need to realize a treaty as quickly as possible. He conveyed a vague sense of threat by first stating that he would be spending the entire afternoon that day "fighting in Congress for foreign aid," because "many Congressmen would prefer that there be none..." Rusk followed with a statement that "further delay" would be economically "costly" for Korea and that he "hoped" that Korea would take that into consideration.²⁴ President Johnson also met Choi and expressed his "earnest hope for normalization of ROK-Japanese relations and reaffirmed the US hope that the talks could move along to a successful solution."²⁵

On 6 May, Ambassador Berger attempted to bring the opposition parties aboard by meeting Yun Posŏn, former President of Korea and now a member of the Assembly and the opposition leader. Rather bluntly, Berger pointed out that the opposition seemed to be taking advantage of the situation by unnecessarily politicizing the issue after rejecting calls by the DRP and the government for bi-partisan action.²⁶ Likewise, Japan was reminded on 22 May of the intense U.S. interest in the progress of the talks and suggested that the upcoming trip by a delegation of LDP members to North Korea be postponed, because it would "play into the hands of Korean opponents of the settlement."²⁷

After a short hiatus, Korean student demonstrations resumed in late April. The Home Minister released a statement which started off with a show of empathy and admiration for the students' idealism and patriotism, but concluded with a warning that the government might have to take "resolute action" if the demonstrations continued.²⁸ In May, Premier Choi was replaced by Chung Ilkwon who announced a renewed government determination to complete the treaty by the end of the year. Chung's statement sparked another series of student demonstrations. Perhaps to take advantage of the political turmoil, North Korea announced on 15 May, the release of two U.S. pilots who had been held captive since May 1963 after straying across the DMZ.²⁹ Seoul National University students held a mock funeral service of "nationalistic democracy" and began to demand the resignation of Park.³⁰

The volatile situation came to a climax on 3 June when bloody clashes occurred between 15,000 students and the police in Seoul. Other demonstrations were reported from around the country. Unwilling to risk the possibility of another student revolution, Park requested the release of two divisions from the UN command and declared martial law. As a measure of placation, Kim Chong Pil, the symbol of the treaty negotiations, was sent on his second exile.³¹

Martial law was lifted on 28 July. Three days later, the new Foreign Minister, Lee Tong Won, spoke of "supra-partisan

diplomacy" in dealing with the talks and called for an early resumption.³² Winthrop Brown, the new U.S. ambassador to Korea, was on his way in August with a personal letter for Park from President Johnson. In his departure meeting with Johnson on 31 July, Brown was told that the normalization issue was a "top priority" of the President. McGeorge Bundy sent a letter to Ambassador Reischauer on 3 August to report on the contents of the LBJ-Brown conversation and to emphasize the President's personal interest and priority on the normalization talks.³³ When Ambassador Brown presented the letter from Johnson to Park on 18 August, Park stated that he earnestly desired to complete the negotiations as soon as possible. The problem was the level of anti-Japanese feeling among the people which threatened the very existence of his government.³⁴

A Japanese statement of apology for wrongdoings during the colonial period could completely change the situation by placating the Korean opposition and allow the talks to be resumed. The U.S. pressed on the Japanese to plan a visit to Korea by former Prime Minister Shigeru Yoshida. Such a visit might ease anti-Japanese feelings. Japan did not agree, stating that the time was not yet "ripe."³⁵

Finally, Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs William P. Bundy visited Japan and Korea between 30 September and 3 October and broke the deadlock. He told the

Japanese that he considered Japan as having the primary responsibility for the settlement. He said,

As a great power, Japan bears special responsibilities to settle outstanding problems with its smaller and heavily burdened neighbor. The Republic of Korea stands as a bulwark against the forces of aggression that threaten the peace of the Far East, and the security of Japan is vitally connected with the ability of the Korean people to maintain their independence and to develop a strong and prosperous economy.³⁶

In Korea, he attempted to strengthen Park's standing in public opinion and assuage public fears of "penetration" by Japan by giving assurances of continued U.S. military and economic relationship and support.³⁷

Even greater impetus was given to the talks when Premier Ikeda resigned on 9 November due to poor health. His replacement, Sato Eisaku, apparently was more eager to conclude the talks than Ikeda in order to ease U.S. pressures for a quick settlement. Any sources of contention between Japan and the U.S. had the potential to affect the vital bilateral trade relationship. Ambassador Reischauer, with his characteristic flair for the dramatic, cabled Washington,

If Japan-ROK relations are to be normalized within the foreseeable future, now is the time. Negative mood of summer and early autumn has given way to decidedly more positive mood...PRIMIN Sato, probably wishing to achieve coup Ikeda never could quite bring off, is pushing with renewed enthusiasm for settlement.³⁸

His older brother, Kishi Nobusuke, had also been a Prime Minister and was responsible for initiating the entire talks in October 1960. Kishi also was a charter member of the Round

Table on the South Korean Problem (Nik-Kan Mondai Kondankai) which became the core of the pro-South Korean lobby in Japan.

To complete the picture. Foreign Minister Shiina Etsusaburo had close ties with Kishi going back to the prewar days. Compared to Ikeda's cautious approach to the rapprochement with Korea, the new cabinet was strongly inclined to bringing about a quick settlement.³⁹ Sato also had other compelling reasons for settling the Korean issue. October was not only important for the staging of the Tokyo Olympics. That month witnessed the explosion of China's first nuclear warhead only days after Khrushchev was purged from the Kremlin. Suddenly surrounded by three nuclear powers and the demise of U.S.-Soviet detente, the American nuclear umbrella seemed more imperative than ever.⁴⁰ The normalization treaty and support for U.S. policy in Vietnam would provide the vehicles for a closer U.S.-Japanese relationship.

First Korean Deployment to Vietnam

Within the context of the brewing storm of American involvement in Vietnam and the volatile drama of the Japanese-Korean negotiations, Korea decided on the first deployment of Korean troops to Vietnam.

Although circumstantial evidence exists which point to earlier negotiations, the formal request for Korean support for the Vietnam War did not come until Johnson launched his "More

Flags" program in April 1964. More interested in a political show of international solidarity against Communist aggression than obtaining substantive military contributions. U.S. ambassadors worldwide were instructed to seek contributions from Free World nations designed to "show their flags. " The program specified that "the nature and amount of the contribution being sought are not for the present as significant as the fact of their being made." General Khanh did his part by sending a personal letter of request to thirty-two governments. However, from the start, the effort to obtain international assistance for Vietnam was an American show. Chester L. Cooper, an NSC aide at the time, later wrote.

One of the more exasperating aspects of the search for "More Flags" was the lassitude, even disinterest, of the Saigon government...It appeared to believe that the program was a public relations campaign directed at the American people. As a consequence, it was left to Washington to play the role of supplicant in the quest for Free World support.⁴¹

By the end of the year, assistance or pledges were obtained from twenty-four nations. The bulk of the pledges was symbolic amounts of food and medicine.

After receiving a request from the U.S. embassy on 6 May, the American Joint Military Assistance Group-Korea (JMAG-K) and the ROK Ministry of Defence immediately began preliminary planning for sending a 140 man MASH (Mobile Army Surgical Hospital) and a ten-man martial arts training team (Tae Kwon Do - TKD).⁴² While intense student demonstrations were taking

place against the normalization treaty talks. the National Assembly's National Security Committee approved the plans on 21 May.⁴³ Before the bill was submitted to the plenary, further discussions took place with the staff of General Howze, commander of all U.S. and UN forces in Korea.⁴⁴ June was marked by a temporary suspension of actions as martial law was imposed, but by early July, planning and organization resumed.

On 13 July, the ROK Army received orders to organize the unit. Over a course of several meetings between 9 and 17 July, General Howze and General Kim Jong Oh, Chief of the ROK Joint Staff Council, agreed on a plan for logistical support and transportation. The United States would provide logistical support for sustainment in Vietnam through MAP channels while the ROK government would bear the cost of pay, travel and per diem.⁴⁵ The final bill was submitted to the National Assembly on 23 July and at the 13th meeting of the 44th National Assembly on 31 August, the deployment bill was passed unanimously.⁴⁶

In the public statement of the Assembly, the following two points figured prominently in justifying the bill.

1. We must send assistance in the fight against Communism, a common enemy, because their actions in Vietnam has an indirect impact on Korea's security.
2. It is the duty of Korea, who herself received assistance from the Free World, to assist allies threatened by Communism.⁴⁷

The motives and rationale stated by Rhee in 1954 had not changed in their significance. There is no evidence that either a serious political or popular opposition existed. On the contrary, there was a feeling of national pride in being able to take this action, a sentiment whipped up even further by a media blitz. Anti-communist ideology and the feeling of indebtedness for the Korean War assistance was widely shared. For Park, this action, relatively cheap, served to unify the country in support of his regime in the midst of the violent opposition against the treaty with Japan.

Coinciding with the ending of martial law, the attention of the opposition party members was on the treaty issue. Patriotic pride and the modest size and innocuous nature of the hospital and martial arts unit did not yet provide the focus for opposition. This would come later when combat troop deployment became the issue. The rapid development of the Vietnam assistance issue and its entanglement with the treaty issue as the focal point of the opposition movement against the government will become one of the main threads of our story.

Two weeks after the Tonkin Gulf incident, a survey team of six ROK and five U.S. officers went to Vietnam to lay the groundwork for the new unit. After an extended period of negotiations with the Vietnamese government, a working agreement was finally reached on 5 September for the unit's location, support and relationship with the Vietnamese and U.S.

military in Vietnam. The 140-man unit shipped out from Pusan on 11 September and arrived in Vietnam on the 22nd.⁴⁸

- ¹ Evans, Rowland and Robert Novak. *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power* (New York: The New American Library, 1966), p. 532.
- ² AHSD 7:E5a. LBJ Library.
- ³ Lee, Chong-Sik. *Japan and Korea: The Political Dimension*. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1985), p. 52 (hereafter referred to as *Japan and Korea*).
- ⁴ Report. "Department of State Policy on the Future of Japan." NSF, Country, Box 250. LBJ Library.
- ⁵ Reischauer. *Life*. p. 276.
- ⁶ Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 110-111.
- ⁷ PP 2:317-323.
- ⁸ For example, the Vietcong were becoming much more aggressive in shooting down helicopters and, in one battle that summer, the South Vietnamese Army suffered 200 casualties, the largest number in a single battle to date. Cooper. *Crusade*. p. 237.
- ⁹ PP 3:126-127.
- ¹⁰ PP 2:324.
- ¹¹ PP 2:326-329.
- ¹² NSAM 314. 10 Sep 64 as cited in PP 3:132. 192-206.
- ¹³ Cooper. *Crusade*. pp. 248-249.
- ¹⁴ Bundy. *Manuscript*. p. 1-4.
- ¹⁵ *NA History*. p. 593; Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 109-110.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 594-595; Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 109-110; Seoul Embtel 2002. 24 Mar 64. NSF, Country, Box 254. LBJ Library.
- ¹⁷ Lee. *Japan and Korea*. p. 51.
- ¹⁸ Seoul Embtel 1220. 25 Mar 64. NSF, Country, Box 254. LBJ Library.
- ¹⁹ Kim. *Treaty*. p. 109.
- ²⁰ Seoul Embtel 1221. 26 Mar 64. NSF, Country, Box 254. LBJ Library.

- 21 Kim. *Treaty*, p. 110; Seoul Embtel 1225 (text of Park's appeal). 26 Mar 64. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 22 Lee. *Japan and Korea*. pp. 51. 55.
- 23 Cable. CINCPAC to JCS. 5 Apr 64. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 24 Memcon. Rusk. Bundy. Choi and others. 9 Apr 64. NSF Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 25 AHSD 7:F3. LBJ Library.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 Seoul Embtel 1332. 20 Apr 64. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 29 Cable. CINCUNC to JCS. 15 May 64. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 30 Kim. *Treaty*. p. 110.
- 31 Cable. CINCUNC to SECST. 3 Jun 64; Cable. COMUSFK to JCS. 3 Jun 64; Seoul Embtel 1591. 3 Jun 64. all in NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library. Also. Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 110-111 and Lee. *Japan and Korea*. p. 51.
- 32 Seoul Embtel 101. 31 Jul 64. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 33 Ltr. McGB to Reischauer. 3 Aug 64. NSF. Country. Box 250. LBJ Library.
- 34 AHSD 7:F3. LBJ Library.
- 35 *Ibid.*
- 36 Quoted in Kim. *Treaty*. p. 79.
- 37 *NA History*. p. 687.
- 38 Tokyo Embtel 1761. 17 Nov 64. NSF. Country. Box 250. LBJ Library.
- 39 Lee. *Japan and Korea*. p. 53.
- 40 Havens. *Fire*. p. 23.

⁴¹ Cooper. *Crusade*. p. 266. Eventually, over forty nations did provide some form of aid to Vietnam. Eight nations - U.S., ROK, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of China and Spain - provided military assistance. The bulk of the combat troops, however, came only from the U.S. and Korea.

⁴² *NA History*. p. 681; Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 121.

⁴³ Ministry of National Defense. *Pawol Hangukgun Jeunsa* [History of Korean Forces in Vietnam] (Seoul: Konghwa Chulpansa, 1978). Vol. 1 (upper). pp. 90 (hereafter referred to as *MND History*). This official history was published as an incomplete set and consists of 9 volumes of text (volume 1 is in two parts, "upper" and "lower") and 8 volumes of operational maps. The coverage of the Korean deliberations is surprisingly detailed although it leaves out much of the actions taking place in the United States which had a direct impact on key decisions made by the ROK government. For example, all the key correspondences and orders are published in full. The English translations are my own. Another MND publication of importance is *Hangukgun Wolnam Pabyong Kwankye Munhunjip* [Collection of Documents Relating to the Dispatching of Korean Troops to Vietnam] (Seoul(?): Asian Affairs Section, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, July 1973), which contains both original language texts of key documents and speeches relating to the entire period of the Korean involvement as well as Korean translations where necessary.

⁴⁴ General Howze wore three hats: commander of the UN Command (CINCUNC), commander of US Forces-Korea (COMUSFK) and commander of the 8th US Army (CDREUSA). Today, the top U.S. commander wears a fourth hat, commander of the Combined Forces Command (CINCCFC).

⁴⁵ *MND History*. pp. 90-91; Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 121.

⁴⁶ *NA History*. pp. 681-682.

⁴⁷ *MND History*. Vol. 1 (upper). pp. 89-92.

⁴⁸ *MND History*. p. 92; Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. pp. 121-122.

CHAPTER 6

November 1964 - April 1965 The Turning Point - Missed Opportunity in Vietnam Japan-Korea Treaty Initialled

Overview

William P. Bundy, in an unpublished manuscript on the Vietnam War, called the November 1964 - March 1965 period the true "turning point" of the war: a period characterized by misguided American policy reviews and decisions.¹ Cooper also wrote of the missed opportunity of that winter as an "ideal moment to have taken a hard look at where we were and where we were going in Vietnam."² On election day, Johnson initiated a sweeping review of U.S. policy. Vietcong activity was becoming ever more intense. Yet, despite the continued stream of dollars and men poured into it, South Vietnam was so mired in political squabbles and turmoil that it seemed incapable of prosecuting the war. When the Vietcong stepped up its attacks on U.S. targets with seeming impunity, American reaction was to escalate further and commit the first ground troops. A series of reprisal air strikes quickly became ROLLING THUNDER, a coercive and sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam. By April, the course was set for a dramatic rise in U.S. troop count. U.S. strength in Vietnam increased from 23,000 in December 1964 to 184,000 by December 1965 w

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While America was swiftly going down the path of no return in Vietnam. Premier Sato was assiduously implementing his strategy for closer U.S.-Japanese relations. His trip to the U.S. afforded him the opportunity to show unequivocal Japanese support for the American Vietnam policy despite significant and growing opposition at home. To be sure, the support was only at the government to government level and largely rhetorical. Still, the escalating war made U.S. bases in Japan a vital link in the long logistical chain across the Pacific. If Japan wished, it could legally restrict U.S. activities at those bases under the provisions of the 1960 Mutual Security treaty. The normalization talks were on its final course, intensifying into weekly meetings. An "apology" by the Foreign Minister for the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea finally cleared the way for the initialling of the basic treaty in February. Even in a new atmosphere of cooperation between Japan and Korea, American pressure continued relentlessly. President Park's scheduled state visit to the U.S. in May became tied to the conclusion of a treaty.

However, the Vietnam War began to play an increasingly more significant role in U.S.-ROK relationship. Concomitant with American escalation came Korean escalation. Between December and March, a second Korean unit was requested, approved and deployed. Its size, 2,000 men, resulted in a 1,000 percent increase in the number of Korean troops in Vietnam.

Vietnam Situation

During the month of November, William P. Bundy headed an inter-agency group to conduct a thorough review of U.S. Vietnam policy. By the end of the month, three options were developed: (1) to maintain the status quo; (2) to intensify military pressures against North Vietnam while resisting negotiations; and, (3) to begin a modest campaign against North Vietnam while vigorously pursuing negotiations.³ Before a formal NSC meeting on 1 December, the NSC principals rejected all three options and formulated a two-phase recommendation. Phase 1 would be an extension of current actions for at least thirty more days with some increase in air attacks. Negotiations with the North would be pursued while the South would be told to implement political and military reforms. Phase 2 would be implemented once the reform efforts were underway in the South and if the North remained intransigent on negotiations. It envisioned a gradual intensification of air attacks against the North while continually sounding out the North Vietnamese on their willingness to negotiate on U.S. terms.⁴

The two-phase course was adopted at the NSC meeting on 1 December. The decision also included a renewed effort to obtain additional assistance from other nations. One of the recommendations made by Bundy's group in line with his option 3 was the organization of a ground force to serve as an additional negotiating ploy. They suggested either a division

of U.S. troops or a force composed of contingents from selected SEATO members (Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Thailand, and the Philippines). It is significant to note that troops from the Republic of China (ROC) or Korea were not to be sought, because of the possibility that it might instigate Communist China to enter the war. The President wanted a "new dramatic [and] effective" form of assistance from allies.⁵ The 1 December decisions included a "consultation" plan to brief key allies on the new policy. During the next two weeks, Thailand, Laos, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, and the UK were briefed on both Phase 1 and 2 while only Phase 1 was briefed to the Philippines, South Korea and the ROC. Ironically, by the end of December, only the last three countries related their willingness to provide military assistance.⁶

The political situation in South Vietnam did not improve. By the end of November, demonstrations by Buddhists and students were staged throughout the country against the Huong government. Huong was accused of being "pro-Diem." The new civilian government was rapidly losing popular support. By 25 November, Huong declared a "state of siege" and resorted to martial law. This was the primary reason for the policy deliberations and decisions in Washington on 1 December.

The situation became even more critical in December when a group of pro-Khanh Young Turks in the Army took control of the civilian High National Council, established the Armed Forces

Council (AFC) and fired several senior generals who didn't fully support Khanh. The U.S. reaction was swift to this return to military rule: Rusk publicly noted that aid to Vietnam might be cut off unless some semblance of national unity returned and the civilian government was restored. Khanh reacted with a diatribe against the United States. U.S.-Vietnamese relations were beginning to strain. Aggravating the situation further was the Vietcong bombing of an American officer's billet in Saigon, killing two and injuring nearly one hundred. This series of events unleashed a wave of "get-out" sentiments in Congress, the media and the universities.⁷ By the end of December, it seemed clear that the U.S. might have to accept a military government.

However, Khanh and his young generals soon backed off and by 11 January, agreed to restore Huong. The crisis seemed over, but the flames of opposition to the government was rekindled by the Buddhists. Within days, the Buddhists began protesting and demanded Huong's resignation. This time, Khanh allied himself with the Buddhists and, with a vote of no confidence by the AFC for Huong, organized an interim military government with General Oanh as Prime Minister.⁸ The U.S. quickly understood that American policy was floundering by late January.

Caught between McNamara's calls for new initiatives, including implementation of Phase 2, and Rusk's reluctance to endorse new actions until the political situation stabilized,

President Johnson sent McGeorge Bundy to Saigon on 3 February for a fresh review of policy options. While Bundy was in Saigon, the Vietcong launched a devastating mortar attack against the U.S. base in Pleiku killing eight and wounding over a hundred men. Johnson, with the unanimous consent of his advisors, approved reprisal air strikes in accordance with the pre-planned FLAMING DART missions. Upon his return on 7 February, Bundy told Johnson that, contrary to Ambassador Taylor's assessments, "Khanh was still the best hope for pursuing the fight against the Communists." However, the U.S. had to convince Khanh to accommodate the Buddhists and incorporate them into the government structure. Bundy further recommended that Phase 2 be implemented as soon as possible. A few days later, Taylor cabled to the State Department his concurrence on the start of Phase 2. The rationale behind Bundy's recommendations was to gain further American leverage against Khanh for political reforms by gaining a favorable popular reaction through the attacks against the North.⁹

The graduated air campaign against North Vietnam envisioned under Phase 2 was called ROLLING THUNDER and it was approved by Johnson on 13 February. Another devastating Vietcong attack, against U.S. billets in Qui Nhon on the 10th, had resulted in 23 more U.S. dead and the President interpreted this as "a clear signal that the Communists were determined to raise the level of violence."¹⁰ Under Taylor's calls for a

"more dynamic schedule of strikes...relentlessly marching North. to break the will of the DRV [Democratic Republic of Vietnam]," the air strikes were transformed into a regular and determined program by 19 March.¹¹

Along with the air strikes. February saw the first decision to introduce U.S. combat troops. The Vietnamese political situation was still in a turmoil. On 16 February. Quat became the new Prime Minister and formed a civilian cabinet only to be subjected to a coup attempt on the 19th. The coup failed. but Khanh was forced to leave the country by the AFC.¹²

The military situation continued to deteriorate. The series of attacks against American targets in February followed on the heels of a major defeat of the ARVN where the Vietcong. for the first time. employed regimental sized (2.000-3.000 man) units. Reports from MACV were bleak. McGeorge Bundy reported after his February trip that. without additional U.S. forces. South Vietnam could collapse within the following year.¹³ By the last week of February. MACV was requesting the deployment of two Marine battalions to protect the large U.S. base in Da Nang. Despite the opposition of Ambassador Taylor. the deployment was approved and made on 8 March.¹⁴

As a follow up. the JCS sent Army Chief of Staff General Johnson for a fact-finding tour in mid March. General Johnson was impressed by the gravity of the situation and returned with

a 21-point program of specific military actions to "arrest the deterioration" of the situation. He further proposed the deployment of a U.S. division to free up Vietnamese forces for offensive operations. Finally, he recommended invoking the SEATO Treaty to create a four-division Multi-Lateral Force (MLF) to be used along the DMZ and in Laos to contain infiltration.¹⁵ McNamara added to the report by stating his preference of employing a ROK division instead of a U.S. division for the purpose of releasing ARVN troops for offensive operations.¹⁶ This marked the first concrete evidence of U.S. policy deliberations concerning the use of ROK combat troops. We shall see later that, despite the recommendation in early November that the use of ROK troops be ruled out, negotiations started almost immediately for additional ROK assistance. Looking at the available documentary evidence, the decision to seek combat troops was made by the Pentagon in face of opposition by State. It was consistent with the pattern of domination of Vietnam decisions by McNamara and the relatively weak voice of Rusk.

By the middle of March, General Westmoreland was requesting two more Marine battalions for security missions at other American bases. At the same time, General Johnson's recommendations were modified by the JCS. The SEATO MLF was dropped at the recommendation of Ambassador Taylor and the U.S.-ROK force levels were expanded to two and one division.

respectively. Their mission was changed from freeing the ARVN to conducting their own independent offensive operations.¹⁷ On 26 March, Westmoreland presented his first "Commander's Estimate of the Situation in South Vietnam," which had an important impact on subsequent decisions for troop commitments. Westmoreland stated that he did not expect ROLLING THUNDER to be effective. Westmoreland wanted immediate reinforcements in order to offset growing Vietcong and North Vietnamese strength and buy time for the South Vietnamese to build up in an orderly fashion. He proposed the deployment of the equivalent of two divisions of soldiers and marines by June to be followed by more if necessary.¹⁸

The developing discussions on reinforcements for Vietnam resulted in a major NSC meeting on 1 and 2 April. This was a pivotal meeting in the history of Vietnam decisionmaking and marked the true turning point of the war. From this moment on, the U.S. was committed to reversing the course of the war. Concurrently, by beginning to consider the employment of major ROK combat organizations, it marked a turning point for Korea as well. By October, 21,000 Korean troops would join a force of 150,000 Americans.

As promulgated by NSAM 328 on 6 April, President Johnson approved General Johnson's 21-point program for stabilizing the situation, the deployments of 18-20,000 support troops, and two Marine battalions. For the moment, he withheld decision for the

divisions requested by MACV and the JCS. but directed the "urgent exploration. with the Koreans. Australian. and New Zealand Governments. of the possibility of rapid deployment of significant combat elements from their armed forces..." Finally and most significantly. he approved a change of mission for the Marine battalions to permit "their more active use under conditions to be established by the Secretary of Defense in consultation with the Secretary of State."¹⁹

What followed in April was a prime example of how McNamara and the military usurped Presidential power to force their own vision of how the war should be prosecuted. In taking steps to execute NSAM 328. they went far beyond the President's intent and instructions to force a much larger deployment of combat troops. It was another stark and unequivocal demonstration of how much McNamara controlled Vietnam policies and the acquiescence. from the President on down. by the foreign policy bureaucracy. As the Pentagon Papers later stated. "[the Defense Department] was determined...to go beyond what had been agreed to and formalized in NSAM 328..."²⁰

Following the Washington conference. McNamara held a DOD planning conference in Honolulu on 9-10 April to implement NSAM 328. Without reference to the NSAM. JCS and PACOM (Pacific Command: the immediate higher headquarters above MACV) recommended the deployment of two Army brigades and preparation for the introduction of two more later. The three-division

force (two U.S. and one ROK) originally envisioned by JCS in mid-March was kept alive as a contingency and kept "in planning." On 14 April, JCS ordered PACOM to deploy a brigade from Okinawa as soon after South Vietnamese concurrence as possible.

Ambassador Taylor was understandably surprised, because these actions were definitely not in accordance with his understanding of NSAM 328. Taylor was concerned at the possible whiplash effect that a large number of foreign troops could have on the xenophobic Vietnamese. Taylor was determined to limit the number of U.S. troop deployment and had to be "sold" the brigade deployment plan as a necessity for the security of the American base in the Bien Hoa-Vung Tau area.²¹ McNamara's opportunity to do this in person came on 20 April in Honolulu when a policy review was conducted by key Washington officials and members of the U.S. Mission in Saigon. Taylor was persuaded by the Pentagon's argument for an expanded deployment plan and agreed to endorse the new recommendations. These included the deployment of nine U.S. battalions, three ROK battalions and an Australian battalion by the middle of June. It included the possible later deployment of 12 additional U.S. battalions and six ROK battalions. These recommendations were stated in a memorandum to the President by McNamara as follows.

[We do not see] a dramatic improvement in the South in the immediate future. [Our] strategy for "victory" over time, is to break the will of the DRV/VC by denying them victory. Ambassador Taylor put it in terms of a

demonstration of Communist impotence, which will lead eventually to a political solution...[We] all suspect that the recent VC lull is but the quiet before a storm.²²

The new military strategy was approved by Johnson on 30 April. ROK combat troop deployment now became an integral part of the overall plan. But, the military and diplomatic preparations had already been made so that when Park made a state visit in May, he was able to tell Johnson that a ROK division could be sent.

Japan-Korea Talks

Just as this period was a turning point for the American involvement in Vietnam, it was the final phase of the Japan-ROK Treaty negotiations. The optimism of November 1964 and Prime Minister Sato's determination to finalize the treaty resulted in the initialling of a basic treaty on 20 February. To the end, however, the U.S. played an important role in cajoling and pressuring both sides to make the concessions that made the agreement possible. Sato's trip to the U.S. in January and the subsequent trip by Park in May, were key markers for the U.S. involvement.

U.S. mediation in November 1964 in the resolution of an on-going dispute was the breakthrough that resulted in the resumption of the talks. In October the ROK government informed Japan of its desire to resume full-scale negotiations by mid-November and invited Foreign Minister Shiina to visit Korea before that time. Japan stated that Shiina could not visit Korea until a number of Japanese fishing boats and their crews.

which had been apprehended for entering Korean waters, were released. The reason for their apprehension lay in the dispute over fishing rights in the Japan Sea, one of the seemingly intractable problems in the negotiations. The Koreans were initially unwilling to release them, but through American pressure, they were freed in mid-November and Japan agreed to the Shiina visit. The talks resumed on 3 December and Shiina announced his intent to visit Korea in early 1965.²³

American deliberations and pressures to hurry the talks continued. In late December, Chester L. Cooper and James C. Thomson, two key Asia hands in the NSC, met ROK Ambassador Kim to reemphasize the President's interest in the talks along with his "urgent interest in increased ROK aid to Vietnam." They also suggested that Park come to Washington after the settlement for a "Victory Feast." Since the May visit had already been discussed, the only way that Ambassador Kim could interpret this was that the visit would somehow be tied to the settlement. But the "stick" was mediated with a "carrot" in the form of an advance notice, at the suggestion of the State Department, that the PL 480 agreement "for which they currently hunger," had been approved.²⁴ On 26 December, McGeorge Bundy wrote to the President concerning Park's visit and stated,

...we ought to use the carrot of such a visit to draw him [Park] toward the Japanese-Korean settlement which means so much to us both politically and financially. We [Bundy and Rusk] propose therefore to keep this one indefinite in the hopes of progress of this sort.²⁵

In the first week of January 1965, a leak threatened to preempt this approach. The State Department was forced to issue a conditional reclamation to the effect that discussions for a visit had taken place, but the date had not yet been set. Thomson informed Bundy of the situation on 6 January, but recommended that the visit remain tied to the settlement. Bundy agreed.²⁶

U.S.-Japan and Vietnam

American pressure, of course, was not limited to the Koreans. But the pressure to be applied to the Japanese was determined more by regional strategic concerns, the emergence of a nuclear China and the deteriorating situation in Indochina, than by the normalization issue. Thomson later referred to the minor role the normalization issue played in Sato's U.S. visit in January as a "sin of omission."²⁷ Clearly though, Sato understood the role of normalization in the matrix of U.S.-Japanese relations. He did not need further pressures. He had other problems to consider. First, he was as concerned with the state of regional security as was the United States. Under the rubric of "defense," came not only the Indochina situation, but the potential instability caused by a nuclear China. He wanted to be firmly in the American defense sphere by supporting the Vietnam policies and by following the U.S. lead on China policies. But only to the extent that the U.S. had

some long range plans for dealing with the two-China issue and thereby accepting the fact that Japan was, at the moment, maintaining at least a trade relationship with Communist China.

There was also the Ryukyus issue. It was Sato's intent to get some sort of a commitment from the U.S. on their eventual return to Japan. Even better would be the immediate return of minor islands in the Ryukyus chain which were not essential for defense. In addition, the dragged out discussions concerning civil air routes through the U.S. for Japan Air Lines threatened to turn acerbic. He needed U.S. concessions to break the deadlock.²⁸

These issues were not lost on Washington. Reischauer, who regarded 1965 as the "Year of Decision" for U.S.-Japan relations, provided detailed reports and had given accurate readings of Sato's positions. The need for Japanese support for the Vietnam policy was a key component of U.S. Asian policy for both symbolic and military reasons. By early January, specific concessions were worked out. These included: (1) expanding the scope of the Joint Consultative Committee on the Ryukyus in Tokyo to include all aspects of civil administration and not just economic aid coordination; (2) permitting gravesite visits by former inhabitants of the Bonin Islands (*Ogasawaras*); and, (3) offering a transcontinental route to New York for Japan Air Lines.²⁹

Sato's visit was a success and his joint communique with Johnson affirmed not only the close relationship of the two countries, but showed American flexibility on the China and Okinawa issues while Japan showed support for the American Vietnam policy. Historian Thomas Havens noted that, although Sato hesitated at this time to give a full fledged support for an escalating war, he was later ironically drawn into providing more active vocal support as the war widened due to his priorities on trade and autonomy.³⁰

Japan-Korea Talks (continued)

By the middle of January, the normalization talks had built up steam. On the 20th, the talks turned into a weekly meeting. American pressures continued. Cooper reminded Kim Chong Pil, who was in the U.S. on the 14th, and the ROK Ambassador the following week, that the Park visit could not be finalized until the U.S. could get a "better reading on the progress [of the talks]."³¹ Ambassador Brown, on the other hand, was exploring ways of providing a more positive incentive for the talks. He cabled Washington on the 15th with his suggestion for a generous aid package to reward a settlement and as a "substantial token" of U.S. support to allay public fears of Japanese economic dominance. He proposed a three year development loan (DL) package of \$150 million, additional PL 480 grants, a \$10 million program loan (PL) for the last

quarter of FY 65, and, mindful of the greater political impact of supporting assistance aid (SA), an additional \$10 million for FY 66.³²

The economic aid issue continued to trouble the Koreans. Since the Kennedy administration, aid levels had been dropping yearly (FY 62 \$120 million, FY 63 \$108 million, FY 64 \$ 105 million).³³ The year 1964 had been particularly difficult due to the pronouncements of several U.S. officials. In January 1964, partially to impress upon the Koreans the need to find another source of economic aid in Japan, David Bell, head of AID, announced his hope that SA for Korea could be eliminated within three to five years. In July, the AID representative in Seoul, James S. Killen, stated that, in a relatively few years, Korea would no longer need foreign assistance.³⁴ Killen made his statement as a form of compliment, to tell the Koreans that they were well on their way to economic self-sufficiency. The Koreans did not share his optimism. After two years of over nine percent growth in GNP in 1963 and 1964, Korea was headed for a slump in 1965 with a 5.8 percent growth.³⁵

American aid reduction policy, which was worldwide, was coupled with efforts to share the burden with Japan. At the third U.S.-Japan economic summit in January 1964, discussions were held on how the two nations could divide and coordinate an economic aid program for Korea. During William P. Bundy's visits to Japan and Korea in October, he made it clear that

Japan had a "special responsibility" for helping Korea develop a strong economy.³⁶ The Kim-Ohira Memorandum of November 1962, still in effect, had settled the claims issue whereby Japan would provide \$300 million in grant payable over ten years, \$200 million in government loans (at 3.5 percent interest paid back over twenty years after a seven year grace period) and \$300 million in commercial credits.³⁷ The claims settlement with Japan was assuming a greater importance. Ambassador Brown's recommendation was, as he stated, more of a political gesture than economic help. However, even as these considerations were being made, other discussions were laying the foundation for a quantum jump in ROK troops for Vietnam, an issue which, with its concomitant military and economic aid packages, would change the entire tone of the U.S. aid program for the ROK.

The talks reached a climax in February with the approaching visit by Shiina on the 17th. Domestic opposition in Korea continued. Typical of the opposition statements was this warning from a university professor. "...there is a risk that Korea may turn into a Japanese commodity market and be [exploited] by comprador capital [if normalization was settled under the conditions currently under discussion]."³⁸

On 6 February, ROK Prime Minister Chung Ilkwon went to Japan in final preparations for Shiina's visit. Shiina's visit on the 17th sparked a spate of student demonstrations in Seoul.

But, what at last "broke the log jam" as Reischauer characterized it, was Shiina's statement that "[Japan]...really regret that an unfortunate period existed in the long history of the two nations, and deeply reflect [*hansei*] on such a past." The Koreans reacted very favorably, regarding it as the statement of apology they had been demanding from the start. A typical response was this comment in a major daily.

[Foreign Minister Shiina's statement] was the first such statement made by the Japanese Government and was considerate and sensitive to the Korean people's sentiments.³⁹

The rallies organized by the Struggling Committee intensified on the 19th, which, after being declared illegal, resulted in a violent melee with the police.⁴⁰ Despite the violence, the two Foreign Ministers initialled a draft treaty on the 20th. To be sure, not all differences were settled. Still outstanding were issues concerning fisheries, claims, economic cooperation and the legal status of Koreans in Japan. But the draft treaty included significant advances which included: (1) the establishment of embassies and an exchange of ambassadors at once; (2) Japanese recognition of Korea's status under the UN formula (which later turned out to be vague enough to allow Japan to deal with North Korea independently, certainly not what South Korea desired); and, (3) agreement that all past treaties, which the Koreans considered humiliating and illegal (therefore 1905 and others), have already been abrogated.

Washington was extremely pleased. Thomson wrote in a memo to McGeorge Bundy that day. "Shiina came as close as a Japanese can to apologizing for Japan's past sins, and everyone--including State--is thoroughly pleased."⁴¹ Two days later, Ambassador Brown conveyed Johnson's invitation for a State visit to the U.S. which Park immediately accepted, setting 17 May for the date.⁴² The White House was hopeful that the final issues would be ironed out quickly and a final treaty signed and ratified before the Park visit. A visit to the U.S. by the ROK Foreign Minister was scheduled for mid-March for final consultations. The ROK Ambassador told Cooper on 4 March that there was a good likelihood that the settlement could be finalized as early as the 10th when Foreign Minister Lee passed through Tokyo and while this might be too optimistic, the settlement would "certainly be worked out before the end of March."⁴³ The final issues were indeed settled on 2 April with the initialling of agreements on claims, economic cooperation, fisheries and the legal status of Koreans in Japan.⁴⁴

The ROK Government began an education campaign the next day to placate a wary populace who were also subjected to the anti-treaty stumpings of the Struggling Committee. By 10 April, student demonstrations renewed in Seoul and Park brought in troops to protect the Capitol building. When a student was killed on the 15th, the anti-Treaty movement had its first martyr and then coalesced into an anti-government protest. Park

was forced to close high schools and universities on the 16th, but held off declaring another martial law. One of the largest riots staged by the Struggling Committee occurred the next day as 45,000 demonstrators gathered in Seoul. After the rally, 5,000 protestors clashed with thousands of riot police and hundreds were injured including four opposition members of the Assembly. The government immediately declared the Struggling Committee illegal, branding it a subversive organization. Opposition leader Yun Posŏn warned Ambassador Brown on the 17th that the Korean public would turn against the U.S. if it continued to support the Treaty. Brown brushed off the threat by telling Yun that it was U.S. policy to continue to support the legally elected government and would not be deterred. In the meantime, riots started in the city of Kwangju on 31 March, a traditional hotbed of anti-government activism, and rapidly spread all over the country. The entire month of April was marked by violent clashes between police and students.⁴⁵

In the midst of the developing crisis over the Treaty, which still needed ratification by the Korean and Japanese legislatures, American Vietnam policy decisions were approaching their own turning point. In the early months of 1965, the two issues would converge in Japan and Korea while the U.S. attempted to juggle them in its relations with Korea.

ROK-Vietnam

Between December 1964 and April 1965, as the normalization talks were reaching their climax, Korea decided on and deployed a large unit of engineers and other support troops. As we have already seen, by March 1965 the U.S. was considering a major deployment of combat troops to Vietnam, a plan which envisioned a prominent and integral role for ROK units. The Korean government had informed the U.S. in December, under the renewed "More Flags" campaign, that it was willing to send combat units to Vietnam. This occurred within the context of the newly revitalized normalization talks, but also under the certain knowledge that Park's visit to the U.S. was hostage to the talks' early and successful conclusion. The visit was of enormous importance for Park. "The United States was strongly suspicious of Park's ideology when he spearheaded the coup of 1961 and withheld its support for a considerable length of time."⁴⁶ The visit could change the tenor of hesitant support once and for all. His earlier visit as Chief of State in November 1963 for Kennedy's funeral had taken place before the National Assembly election and could not be counted as a legitimate state visit. The May 1965 visit would not only improve his domestic and international prestige and position, but would serve as a visible reminder to a worried and suspicious nation that relations with the U.S. remained solid and normalization with Japan would not result in Japanese

"penetration." Above all, he hoped to return with a symbolic gesture in the form of increased U.S. aid to lock in the message.

Within this frame of mind, Park saw Johnson's call for "More Flags" in Vietnam as a golden opportunity. An opportunity for a guarantee. Korean support in Vietnam could serve three vital purposes: (1) to further cement, in its own right, U.S.-ROK relationship through alliance and aid; (2) to serve as insurance for that relationship in the event the normalization talks broke down again; and (3) to increase Korea's and Park's regional and international importance and influence. He had to walk a fine line between what he thought was best for the future political role of Korea in regional affairs and its military and economic security with the emotional activism of a minor, but violent and vocal opposition. His best scenario was to have both the Treaty and a closer relationship with the U.S. with a placated populace.

The U.S. was soon caught in a quandry between pressuring the Koreans for a settlement with Japan and obtaining support for Vietnam. Strategically, the two issues were intimately related. Japan's role as a regional power center forming an economic and security block against the increasing Communist threat from a nuclear China and an unfriendly Soviet Union was completely in line with the containment policies being pursued in Indochina. The escalation and increasing criticism of the

Vietnam War required greater economic and moral support from other Free World nations. Diplomacy concerning these two issues merged in the winter of 64-65 and the U.S. tolerated Park's repressive measures in order to obtain resolution on both.

The two-phase strategy adopted for Vietnam in early December by the U.S. also called for briefing key allies and soliciting additional assistance. A State Department position paper for the NSC meeting on 2 December noted that the results of the "More Flags" were meager. To date, only a little over 500 non-American personnel had deployed to Vietnam although various minor food and medical assistance were obtained from almost a dozen countries. The two largest contributors were Australia with 167 advisors and support personnel, and the 140 Koreans of the hospital/martial arts unit.⁴⁷

Efforts were stepped up in December. The State Department selected a full time official to coordinate the effort and to meet daily with Cooper in the NSC. It also appointed an action officer in each geographic bureau who would handle the details of coordinating regional efforts. In addition, the JCS sent out a message on 15 December to all U.S. embassies in the Free World to make an "urgent survey of military units that could be usefully put to work in Vietnam." These surveys were due within a week, after which the State Department would make an official request.⁴⁸

From the start, there was recognition of and willingness to bear the cost of these contributions. Cooper and McGeorge Bundy wrote to the President on 15 December. "In most cases it will probably be necessary to pay (either through MAP or AID) the operational costs of sending a Third Country unit to Vietnam."⁴⁹ The issue of America paying to have third-nation troops in Vietnam would come to a head later, in particular, during a crisis with the media in late 1967 and during the public hearings conducted by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1970 (Symington Hearings).⁵⁰ The problem also included convincing the South Vietnamese to accept the assistance. Even as the war was becoming Americanized, one of the overriding concerns was to show a modicum of Vietnamese control. In their weekly status report to McGeorge Bundy, Thomson and Cooper wrote on 17 December. "We face an immediate problem of pushing the GVN into the forefront on requests to third countries, so that this is not a purely U.S. show."⁵¹ As we have already seen, Ambassador Taylor shared the same concern to the extent that he later resisted the introduction of a large number of U.S. troops in the Spring. But the Vietnamese government was no longer a factor: political turmoil and an endless series of new governments had undermined its credibility and U.S. confidence. The war became a "U.S. show."

Based on the JCS cable of 15 December, Ambassador Brown visited President Park on the 18th and determined that a 2,000-

man unit of engineers and support troops, to be called the Dove Unit, could be made available. Upon receipt of this information, in a joint State/DOD cable, Brown was instructed to begin immediate negotiations for the unit, stating that the unit was wanted in Vietnam "ASAP." The cable carried a sense of euphoria at the prospect of getting the first major allied contribution for the war.⁵² The situation in Vietnam was deteriorating and implementation of Phase 2 escalation was seriously being contemplated. To place the force of 2,000 in perspective, one must remember that U.S. force level in December was "only" 23,000. In the meantime, negotiations in Seoul proceeded rapidly and by the 24th, a joint memo by the ROK CJCS General Kim Jong Oh and General Howze, CDRUSFK (Commander, U.S. Forces - Korea), announced the composition of the unit.⁵³ Washington thought deployment could be as early as sometime in January.⁵⁴

By the end of the year, planning preparations were completed by the ROK JCS. The U.S. campaign for "More Flags" was not faring as well. Korea was the only country which had unequivocally committed itself. While the ROC also stated its eagerness, their offer was not accepted due to potential "political problems." The Filipino response was held up over squabblings on pay. New Zealand was sympathetic, but made no offers. And nothing came out of Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. Getting South Vietnam to go along remained a

problem. In order to intensify the search and to obtain South Vietnamese support for the program, coordination meetings were held on 5 January in Manila and 11 January in Washington.⁵⁵ The Vietnamese were finally convinced of the need to send formal requests from the government of Vietnam to nations which could offer assistance.

The ROK received its letter on 2 January, requesting assistance in flood relief work to free up Vietnamese troops and two days later, began the task of organizing and training the Dove unit. An eight-man advance party was dispatched on the 8th to begin coordination in-country for location and support.⁵⁶ But there remained the potentially problematic legislative process for approving the bill for the deployment. This process lasted for most of January and became the forum for opposition politicians to definitively express their anti-government sentiments. Coming on the heels of the revitalized normalization talks, protesting the Vietnam deployment merged with protests against the Treaty. Not to do so meant a partial show of support for the Park regime which they could not afford to do when the showdown on the Treaty issue was rapidly approaching. Ironically, this made the government's task much easier as we shall see.

ROK Legislative Process

There were two major differences marking this deployment with the earlier one. First, much of the cost of the deployment and support was to be provided by the U.S. And second, there was a protracted debate in the National Assembly lasting from 15 to 28 January. Starting only a few days after Sato's successful state visit to the U.S., the normalization issue conditioned much of the opposition attitude toward a government sponsored bill. But, that is not to say that there were not other concerns directly related to the political and military impact of the involvement.

The Dove Unit Bill was submitted to the National Assembly on 15 January and debated for two weeks. It even included an appearance by Ambassador Brown. The Bill was passed on 25 January by a vote of 106 for, 11 against and 8 abstentions. Before the balloting, 23 members of the Citizen Rule Party (CRP), led by Yun Posŏn, walked out. Ambassador Brown's report to Washington cited the use of secret balloting as the reason for the walkout. However, the official National Assembly history clearly indicated that fundamental differences in position was the true culprit.⁵⁷

Park, and by extension, the DRP, the majority party, had no intention of having the Bill defeated for Park had promised the U.S. that the unit would be sent. The day before the Bill was submitted, Ambassador Kim Hyun Chul, and KCIA Director Kim

Chong Pil, who was in Washington at the time, paid a call on the White House where they had an interesting conversation with Cooper. They discussed three topics beginning with the aid issue and the considerable concern over the cut backs. Cooper gave them a vague but reassuring answer by pointing out that although it was true that the aid program was being cut, the American military and economic aid program to Korea was one of the largest. Further, under the present program, he was "sure that Korea would not suffer." Having closely tracked the "More Flags" program, Cooper was intimately aware of the Korean response. The second topic was Vietnam. Kim Chong Pil started by assuring Cooper that "President Pak [sic] considered Vietnam as a very high priority problem and was willing to do *almost anything* that President Johnson requested" (emphasis mine). Cooper's appreciative response was that "we all looked forward to the arrival of the Korean contingent in early February."⁵⁸ Obviously, the task in the Assembly debate was not how to pass the Bill, but how to justify a *fait accompli*.

The debate itself was an orderly affair and the opposition Assemblymen were given full opportunities to present their arguments. The government Bill was introduced with a justification echoing familiar themes of Communist containment, national security, repayment of the Korean War "debt," and obligations of an ally.

The present situation of Communist aggression against Vietnam is having a direct and indirect effect on the

security of our nation...On January 2nd, the Republic of Vietnam made a request for the reinforcement of our MASH/TKD unit with a non-combat unit. Korea received assistance from sixteen allied nations during the Korean War. We now have the duty and responsibility to save Southeast Asia from Communist aggression and thereby insure the peace and freedom of Northeast Asia. Therefore, we propose the earliest dispatch of assistance [of a non-combat 2000-man engineer/transport unit]..."⁵⁹

Opposition arguments centered on six themes:

(1) Constitutionality - The dispatch of troops to Vietnam is unconstitutional.

(2) Impact on ROK security - The ROK-U.S. Security Treaty does not obligate the U.S. to an automatic response if ROK was attacked. This condition should be corrected first.

(3) "Tip of the iceberg?" - Since 2000 men is a relatively small force with minimal impact on the war effort, the government is trying to set the stage for additional deployments, up to a division or two.

(4) Uncertain U.S. commitment - U.S. policy is not yet firmly committed to staying in Vietnam to the end. Korean presence there will put Korea in a dire predicament when the U.S. pulls out.

(5) Public opinion - The government must make a full disclosure of the envisioned objective and extent of the involvement and seek a public referendum before deciding.

(6) Situation in Vietnam - Political turbulence and questionable military situation in Vietnam demands caution rather than involvement.

Prime Minister Chung denied or dismissed all the arguments and reemphasized the obligations. He tried to sweeten the argument in more concrete terms by noting: that a revision of the security treaty is being worked on and this gesture of support to the U.S. will help; that a secret U.S. white paper on Vietnam showed that they were not going to pull out; and revealed American willingness to bear the cost of overseas

pay.⁶⁰ The diametrically opposing arguments of the two sides resulted in a walkout by most of the opposition. The few who remained to vote provided cautious arguments of support. While they accepted the moral obligations of assisting an ally in the fight against Communism, they wondered what would happen if the U.S. lost the war. Further, they pointed out that the government seemed to be counting on being made an equal partner in the determination of Vietnam policy, but warned the government to be prepared for the failure of such an arrangement.⁶¹

The passage of the Bill, though not in jeopardy due to the DRP majority, was made certain by the walkout. Park's perceived necessity and justification for the reinforcement have already been covered, but two points need to be further expanded. The first is the relationship of the deployment with the treaty crisis. Simply put, Park attempted to create an ideological government cause, taking advantage of the particular brand of fanatical anti-Communism in Korea, to stir the nation's sense of patriotism and pride. Mobilizing popular support for the government through the Vietnam troop issue would severely undermine the level of popular opposition against the treaty. It was the old formula of a just war unifying a country, for better or worse. This logic was a major factor in the decision to expand the Vietnam commitment to a division of combat troops when the opportunity arose as a result of the U.S. Vietnam

policy. Thus, the soldiers who composed the Dove Unit were volunteers of the highest caliber, the strongest, the brightest and the proudest that Korea could offer. They were not only the sturdy emissaries of a country in a foreign land, but also, ambassadors of a troubled regime to its own people. The policy of sending only the best qualified candidates continued until the withdrawal in 1973.

ROK Public & Press

The Korean press, not always cooperative with the government, aided in the cause even when their stories attempted to point out the problem of the deployment. A spate of human interest stories began appearing in the papers in February. A typical one from *Hanguk Ilbo* [Korean Daily], published on 5 February, was a story on the training being conducted by members of the Dove Unit with spot interviews. Few could read stories like these and not feel a sense of national pride at their dedicated young warriors. A Marine sergeant was quoted as saying, "I volunteered because I want to help a free ally, and because I wanted to see a foreign country, and eat pineapples and bananas. I could not sleep for fear I would be rejected at the physical examinations." An Army officer was quoted, "I have been with the Army for 12 years. I want to do something worthwhile in a foreign country, for our

engineer[ing] techniques are not inferior to that of the U.S."⁶²

Another type is represented by the editorials which were critical of the decision, but unable to repress an intense sense of patriotism and support. An editorial in *Dong-A Ilbo* [East Asia Daily] written on 8 February after a large "national rally for the send off of troops," is titled "Crusade to Vietnam" and starts off.

The dispatch of troops to Vietnam is now a fait accompli...Let us just call it another ordeal of this nation...Our "crusaders of freedom" are bravely departing with resolute determination!

Let us only show them the positive aspects: Our premonition isn't too good, but never mind, warriors, since "a bad dream means a good luck." We only pray for their safety. Good luck!⁶³

One final example, an editorial from *Hanguk Ilbo* on the same rally, should complete the point.

...The feelings of their parents, brothers, sisters and wives must be very mixed [as they send off the troops]...As they are going away anyway, we should exchange handshakes with a smile, and pray for their safety and a triumphant return home

...They are about to write [a] new chapter in the histories of both Korea and Vietnam.

"Go abroad to become a patriot." We expect them to contribute much to their homeland after they return home.⁶⁴

The second point is the growing realization of a perceived security threat from the war. The government statement introducing the Dove Unit Bill clearly stated that the Vietnam conflict was now judged to have a "direct effect" on the

security of Korea. These were not idle words nor were they included to artificially heighten the importance of the war. It was a belief rooted in the policy decisions deliberated in Washington at the time. The close and frequent consultations stemming from the American desire to bring about the normalization treaty also resulted in a close reading of the changing U.S. policy. The fortunate culmination in timing of the conclusion of the Treaty, Park's first state visit, U.S. escalation in Vietnam, and the requirement for ROK troops, allowed Park to achieve all of his goals within the first six months of 1965. It was an epochal moment for his regime. And it would not have been possible without Vietnam.

These points were not entirely unforeseen by the United States. A fascinating State Department study done on 4 February titled "Use of ROK and GRC [Government of the Republic of China] Forces Outside Their Homelands." stated.

Despite its domestic difficulties (part of which is opposition for opposition's sake) the Korean Government can probably be made to feel that use of Korean forces abroad will actually have beneficial political effects within Korea. It would help to foster an international role for South Korea and give the country a sense of purpose and direction which it does not now have.⁶⁵

But, the study missed one important point when it continued. "This could tend to distract popular attention from certain lures of unification." The distraction was more relevant for the Treaty dispute.

Park's willingness to expand the Korean effort in Vietnam to combat missions began in early March, precisely when McNamara was proposing to send an ROK division to free up Vietnamese troops for offensive operations. Ambassador Kim made his first overture on 4 March when he visited Cooper at the White House. After conveying a "situation report" on the post-Shiina visit status of the normalization talks, Ambassador Kim asked "if there would be any interest in a Korean offer of combat troops for Vietnam." Cooper rightfully replied, yet unaware that just ten days later McNamara would consider the deployment of an entire ROK division, that "there was no present intent to use Third Country ground forces."⁶⁶

The Dove Unit arrived in Vietnam on 16 March, just eight days after two U.S. marine battalions stormed ashore at Da Nang to mark the beginning of American combat troop deployments.⁶⁷ In the meantime, General Johnson had returned from Vietnam on the 12th with his 21-Point program which precipitated the debate in the Pentagon for including a ROK division in a proposed three division force. The formal decision to seek Korean and other allied troops would not be made until the decisions of early April (NSAM 328), but efforts were already underway in the White House in late March to lay the groundwork.⁶⁸

The ROK Defense Minister made a visit to Vietnam on 1 April. Although no evidence has been found that he discussed

the combat troop issue with MACV. such a conclusion would be logical.⁶⁹ At the same time. NSAM 328 was approved and Ambassador Lodge was sent on a special Presidential mission to brief the heads of state in Australia. New Zealand. the Philippines. Taiwan. Japan and Korea (order as stated in the press release).⁷⁰ Although the mission was labelled as "consultation." it was in fact a special mission to obtain "More Flags." By the end of April. the decisions of McNamara's 20 April planning conference in Honolulu went beyond the scope of NSAM 328 and made at least a regiment of ROK troops an integral part of a new build up plan.

A new twist to the Korean offer of combat troops was presented in an unusual forum. On 29 April. Assemblyman Kim Yong Tae. the head of the main faction in the DRP. spoke with Robert W. Barnett. the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Economic Affairs. Kim was on a U.S. sponsored trip for key foreign political leaders. After an exchange about Kim's impression of the United States and the Korea-Japan Treaty. the discussion turned to Korean assistance in Vietnam. As described in the White House record of their conversation. Assemblyman Kim had stated that.

...2.000 Koreans in Viet-Nam were not enough to maintain their own security. Prudent men of *both sides politically* in Korea had said that at least a division-size unit was needed for that reason. The unit had already been subjected to a surprise attack. [Kim] favored sending additional troops. after the Korea-Japan settlement controversy had passed.⁷¹ (emphasis mine)

Kim was wrong on two counts. opposition to the division would be far worse than it was for the Dove Unit deployment and would create a political crisis similar in proportion to and linked with the Treaty issue. And, Park would change the priority, division first and Treaty ratification second, after committing himself to the division during his visit in May and faced with a block opposition on both issues. However, Assemblyman Kim was entirely correct to state that Korea (therefore Park and the DRP) wanted to send a division.

- 1 Bundy. *Manuscript*. pp. 1-5 and 1-6.
- 2 Cooper. *Crusade*. p.252.
- 3 PP 3:210-231.
- 4 *Ibid.* pp. 236-248.
- 5 *Ibid.* pp. 226. 249-250.
- 6 *Ibid.* pp. 257-258: *MND History*. pp. 93-94.
- 7 Cooper. *Crusade*. pp. 249-252. PP 2:345-350.
- 8 PP 2:352-353.
- 9 *Ibid.* pp. 353-354: Cooper. *Crusade*. pp. 256-261.
- 10 Johnson. *Vantage*. p. 129.
- 11 PP 3:271-272.
- 12 PP 2:354.
- 13 PP 3:424-425.
- 14 *Ibid.* pp. 417-423.
- 15 Memo. "Johnson Report Outline." 14 Mar 65. NSF. Country. Box 191. LBJ Library.
- 16 PP 3:429.
- 17 *Ibid.* p. 406.
- 18 *Ibid.* p. 407.
- 19 NSAM 328 in PP 3:702-703.
- 20 *Ibid.* 451.
- 21 *Ibid.* pp. 451-452.
- 22 Memo. McNamara to LBJ. 21 Apr 65. NSF. McGB Memos to the Pres. Box 3. LBJ Library.
- 23 AHSD 7:F3. LBJ Library: *NA History*. p. 687.
- 24 Memo. Cooper/Thomson to McGB. 24 Dec 64. Reference File. This Week in Asia. LBJ Library.

- 25 Memo. McGB to LBJ. 26 Dec 64. NSF. McGB Memos to the Pres. Box 2. LBJ Library.
- 26 Memo. Thomson to McGB. NSF. Country. Box 256. LBJ Library.
- 27 Memo. Thomson to McGB. 12 Jan 65. NSF. Country. Box 253. LBJ Library. Thomson and Cooper reported to McGB after the visit. "Sato returns without a strong sense of White House passion for a Japan-Korea settlement. So far, Sato's own private views are good on this; but, without added push, he may lose enthusiasm when the Koreans get more difficult in the weeks immediately ahead" (Memo. Cooper/Thomson to McGB. 15 Jan 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library).
- 28 Memo. Thomson/Cooper to McGB. 7 Jan 65. Reference File. This Week in Asia: Memcon. Sato and Rusk, 13 Jan 65. NSF. Country. Box 250: both in LBJ Library.
- 29 Memo. Thomson/Cooper to McGB. 7 Jan 65. Reference File. This Week in Asia. LBJ Library. The final civil air agreement was signed on 28 Dec 65 (Reischauer, *Life*. p. 293).
- 30 Havens. *Fire*. pp. 26-27.
- 31 Memcon. Cooper and Kim. 14 Jan 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library; Memo. Cooper/Thomson to McGB. 22 Jan 65. Thomson Papers. Box 11. JFK Library.
- 32 Seoul Embtel 633. 15 Jan 65. NSF. Country. Box 254.
- 33 "The Agency for International Development During the Administration of President Lyndon B. Johnson, November 1963-January 1969." p. 344. LBJ Library (hereafter formatted as AID:344).
- 34 Kim. *Treaty*. p. 79.
- 35 Amsden. Alice H.. *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization* (New York/Oxford: Oxford Univ Press, 1989). p. 56.
- 36 Kim. *Treaty*. p. 79.
- 37 *Ibid*. p. 57.
- 38 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 6. No. 28 (4 Feb 65). Item 38 (*Chosun Ilbo*. 3 Feb 65).
- 39 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 283; Lee. *Japan and Korea*. pp. 53-54; *NA History*. p. 827; Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 50-51; *Chosun Ilbo*.

21 Feb 65.

40 Kim. *Treaty*. p. 111.

41 Memo. Thomson to McGB. 20 Feb 65. Thomson Papers. Box 11. JFK Library.

42 Seoul Embtel 784. 22 Feb 65. NSF. Country. Box 256. LBJ Library.

43 Memo. Thomson/Cooper to McGB. 1 Mar 65. Reference File. This Week in Asia: Memcon. Cooper and Ambassador Kim. 4 Mar 65. NSF. Country. Box 254; both in LBJ Library.

44 *NA History*. pp. 851-852; AHSD 7:F3. LBJ Library.

45 *NA History*. pp. 850-851; AHSD 7:F3. LBJ Library; Kim. *Treaty*. pp. 111-112; Seoul Embtel 983. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.

46 Lee. *Japan and Korea*. pp. 62-3.

47 Tab C (Third Country Assistance to Vietnam) from "Position Paper on SE Asia." 2 Dec 64. NSF. McGB Memos to the Pres. Box 2. LBJ Library.

48 Memo. McGB/Cooper to LBJ. 15 Dec 64. NSF. McGB Memos to the Pres. Box 2. LBJ Library.

49 *Ibid*.

50 U.S. Congress. Senate. *U.S. Security Agreement and Commitment Abroad*. Vol II. Parts 5 (Japan) and 6 (Korea). Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations. 91st Congress. 2nd Session. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

An interesting exchange of notes took place between W.W. Rostow, the National Security Advisor, and LBJ on 13 Dec 67. Under requests by the press for the release of agreements on assistance to countries with troops in Vietnam to include the exact dollar figures, Rostow proposed a press release to try to preempt the use of the term "mercenaries" to characterize the troops. The press release started off by stating that the agreements were covered by the non-disclosure sanction of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It continued, however, to spell out the number of troop contribution by country and included a general point stating that the U.S. was providing equipment and supplies in some cases and the assistance programs of others were adjusted. It concluded by stating, "In sum, we have provided the assistance needed to enable these

developing countries to join a cause they support by reason of their own views of their national interests and security." President Johnson's comment was succinct in his disapproval. "I'd cite Section 552(b), Title 5 [FOIA non-disclosure sanction] and that's all I'd say - if you don't agree call me." (Memo. WWR to LBJ, 13 Dec 67 and "Statement to the Press," undated: both in NSF. Country. Box 91. LBJ Library)

51 Memo. Cooper/Thomson to McGB, "The Week That Was." 17 Dec 64. Thomson Papers. Box 11. JFK Library.

52 Deptel 557(Seoul)/1341(Saigon). 23 Dec 64. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.

53 *MND History*, p. 93; Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*, p. 122.

54 Memo. Cooper/Thomson to McGB, "The Week that Was." 24 Dec 64. Reference File. This Week in Asia. LBJ Library.

55 Memo. Cooper/Thomson to McGB, "The Week that Was." 31 Dec 64. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.

56 *MND History*, p. 94; *NA History*, p. 816.

57 Seoul Embtel 670. 26 Jan 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library; *NA History*, p. 813.

58 Memcon. Cooper and Kim. 14 Jan 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.

59 *NA History*, p. 816.

60 *Ibid.* pp. 817-821.

61 *Ibid.* pp. 821-822.

62 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 6, No. 29 (5 Feb 65). pp. 26-28 (*Hanguk Ilbo*, 5 Feb 65).

63 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 6, No. 32 (9 Feb 65). Item 20 (*Dong-A Ilbo*, 8 Feb 65).

64 *Hanguk Ilbo*, 10 Feb 65.

65 Enclosure 3 (Use of ROK and GRC Military Forces Outside Their Homelands) to "Papers on the Republic of Korea. Submitted to Participants in the Chiefs of Mission Conference. Baguio. February 15-17, 1965." Thomson Papers. Box 18. JFK Library.

66 Memcon. Ambassador Kim and Cooper. 4 Mar 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.

67 Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 123.

68 Memo. McGB to LBJ. 31 Mar 65. NSF. McGB Memos to the Pres. Box 3. LBJ Library.

69 *MND History*. p. 97.

70 Memo. McGB to Valenti for the Pres. 10 Apr 65; Ltr. LBJ to Park. 15 Apr 65. Both. NSF. Country. Box 193. LBJ Library.

71 Memcon. Assemblyman Kim and Barnett. 29 Apr 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.

CHAPTER 7

May 1965 - November 1965

Vietnam Escalation Partners in Arms: First ROK Combat Troops in Vietnam Japan-Korea Treaty Ratification Battles

Overview

The middle months of 1965 marked a dramatic escalation of the American intervention in Vietnam. Historians have seen the decisions in Washington in July 1965, which approved deployment of over 100,000 additional combat troops, as the most critical step for full scale and massive intervention, one which finally committed the U.S. to "Americanizing" the war. In light of the decisions made in the November 1964 to April 1965 period, one can just as easily and credibly conclude that it was an inevitable and a logical extension of those earlier decisions. Larry Berman's well known and expert treatise on the decisions of late July 1965 clearly demonstrated that the decision in July was not whether withdrawal might have been possible, but how a greater intervention could be justified.¹ U.S. troop strength increased to nearly 80,000 by July as a result of the April 1965 decisions which stretched the intent of NSAM 328. The July escalation resulted in a troop level of over 180,000 by December.

American escalation of the war strained U.S.-Japanese

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relations. The level of public (mostly left wing) protest against the war and U.S. intervention increased notably and reached the streets when ROLLING THUNDER began in February with a rally organized by Sohyo, a leading labor federation. By the end of April, prominent academics and intellectuals, openly petitioned the government to take actions against the war and against U.S. involvement. This period also witnessed the birth of a powerful antiwar movement called the Beheiren (*Betonamu ni Heiwa o! Shimin Rengo*: Citizen's Federation for Peace in Vietnam). With close ties to antiwar movements in the U.S., the Beheiren would organize numerous marches and other antiwar activities for the ensuing years to mobilize Japanese public protest.² Ambassador Reischauer noted that by the end of April, "...American actions in Vietnam had grown to be the major newspaper story and the main cause of friction between the Japanese public and the United States."³ In May, the LDP publicly issued a unified statement of its factions which showed support for the U.S. while assuring the general public that Japan would not be directly involved in the war. It was attempting to walk a fine line between assuring the U.S. and placating public fears. The success of the LDP was demonstrated when the Upper House elections of July 4 resulted in the LDP maintaining its majority.⁴ The protest movement increased in intensity through the summer of 1965. By August, however, the movement converged with a growing protest against the Japan-

Korea Treaty. A link was seen between the normalization and the Vietnam War when the ROK National Assembly, in August, approved the deployment of a combat division.⁵ In a situation reminiscent of Korea, anti-government activism in Japan became intricately tied to protest against the war and the treaty.

The situation in Korea was no less volatile in the protest demonstrations against the treaty. By early June, there was a new vigor in the intensity of the demonstrations as the formal signing was just days away. Its signing on June 22nd prompted hunger strikes and massive demonstrations in Seoul. But the focus soon shifted to the ratification process in the National Assembly. The treaty signing and ratification process went hand-in-hand with the Vietnam troop issue. Park's successful visit to the U.S. in May was soon followed by the submission of a government bill for deploying a division of combat troops, Korea's first, in mid-July as President Johnson was reaching his decision to dramatically expand the U.S. effort. The treaty bill and the troop bill literally converged in mid August as a special session of the National Assembly passed both bills.

By September, the Vietnam war escalation decisions of the U.S. had directly impacted on the Japan-Korea Treaty issue. Korea was committed as the most important ally in Vietnam. As we shall see, the passage of the troop bill was largely due to the voracity of the opposition to the treaty bill which resulted in a walkout by the opposition Assemblymen from the

session. Japan reaffirmed its support for U.S. policies in Vietnam, but in turn faced anti-government demonstrations whipped up by the war and the treaty and exacerbated by the Korean troop deployment. The treaty, in fact, would not be ratified until November. But, perhaps reflecting the inherent trust of the majority of the ordinary Japanese public for the LDP and the government, Japan was able to maintain a skillful balance which allowed her to reap the benefits of economic opportunities presented by a closer tie with the U.S., ROK and the war and obtain favorable U.S. positions on bilateral economic issues and progress on the Okinawa question.

The tale after the summer of 1965 is a continued success story for Japan and Korea in their pursuit of economic, political and security goals. The normalization treaty meant an era of unprecedented economic cooperation which continues to this day. For the U.S., on the other hand, the war would prove to be increasingly frustrating and result in a national tragedy.

Vietnam Situation

By early May, U.S. decisions in April to deploy nine U.S., three ROK and one Australian battalions was being implemented. In early June, however, a new crisis developed as General Westmoreland reported definite signs of a Vietcong summer offensive which threatened to overwhelm South Vietnam. The new

threat precipitated Westmoreland to request a dramatic increase in U.S. combat troops to stabilize the situation. the so called "44 battalion request" of 7 June. This request would be the basis for Johnson's decision in late July to deploy 100,000 more Americans in addition to the 80,000 already approved or in-country.

On 8 May, Westmoreland had sent a concept of operations for the utilisation of U.S./allied combat forces in support of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) based on the April discussions and decisions. It envisioned a three stage plan to secure base areas and then decisively wrest the initiative from the enemy followed by offensive operations to defeat him. U.S./allied roles were seen as integral to all three stages. Part of the assumptions made by Westmoreland was the availability of a full ROK division which would be deployed to the central coastal region of Qui Nhon and Nha Trang.⁶ Although the official process of getting South Vietnam to request a division from Korea did not occur until mid June and a joint U.S.-ROK planning for the divisional deployment only started at the end of June, Westmoreland and MACV were pursuing military planning which required the ROK division.

Even as Westmoreland was formulating his strategy for victory, the Vietcong did not remain idle. Operations began in May to build up to a major offensive by June. A regimental attack in early May in Phuoc Long province north of Saigon, the

first regimental attack in five months, marked the start of the offensive season. Later in May, an ARVN battalion was annihilated by a Vietcong ambush near Quang Ngai, a coastal city in the north. Pressure intensified in the central highlands as well when a district town was overrun in Pleiku province and a Special Forces camp was besieged.⁷ A cable from the U.S. embassy in Saigon on 5 June expressed fears that "recent ARVN defeats raised the possibility of collapse." Two days later, Westmoreland sent a message to CINCPAC to emphasize that the summer offensive was underway and without quick approval and deployment of all forces currently under planning (which included the ROK division) plus additional forces (totalling 44 battalions of which 9 were ROK, one Australian and 34 U.S.), "the ARVN would be unable to stand up to the pressure."⁸ William Bundy's later recollection provides a vivid portrait of the impact of the reports flowing out of Vietnam.

...when they started this offensive May 18th or thereabouts, it went like Gangbusters! That was the most successively, utterly depressing six weeks of action reports I can recall, was May and June of '65. They really were just--not a day without some overpowering ambush or some unit cut to ribbons!⁹

Westmoreland's request stirred a sharp debate in Washington throughout June and July. When asked by the JCS on 22 June whether the 44 battalion force would be sufficient to "convince the DRV/VC they could not win," Westmoreland replied, as he later wrote in his memoir,

"The direct answer to your basic question," I wrote, "is 'No.'" It would take until the end of 1965 to get all the forty-four battalions to Vietnam and "establish the military balance." For 1966, when I would hope to "gain and maintain the military initiative," I was unable to say what additional forces might be required..."Instinctively," I wrote, "we believe that there may be substantial additional U.S. force requirements."¹⁰

As an interim measure, Westmoreland was given authorization on 26 June to commit U.S. forces to combat "in any situation in which the use of such troops is required" in support of the ARVN "and when, in [Westmoreland's] judgment, their use is necessary to strengthen the relative position" of ARVN forces.¹¹ The newly granted authority for direct combat was immediately utilized the next day when a three day offensive operation was conducted by three U.S., one Australian and five ARVN battalions.

By 1 July, debate in Washington was further complicated by Undersecretary of State George Ball's recommendation for a limited U.S. reinforcement (15 battalions; 72,000 men) with combat roles restricted to base security and reserve support for the ARVN. Ball further recommended that a withdrawal should be effected as soon as possible. The basis for Ball's drastic recommendations was his belief that the war could not be won regardless of the level of U.S. efforts. In retrospect, Ball's views, based on the French experience in the 46-54 war, was the wisest counsel for the president. While Johnson gave a full airing to Ball's position, detailed analysis of the debate in July clearly showed that Ball played a "devil's advocate" in

the cabinet and may have been a consciously planned foil to give Johnson a future denial to criticisms that he only heard one side of the troop argument.¹²

The debate was also tempered by the political situation in South Vietnam. Quat, who had become the Prime Minister in February to head a civilian government, attempted to shake up the cabinet in May. His attempt to fire two ministers was opposed by Suu, the Chief of State. Unable to break their impasse, both resigned and turned the government over to the military. On 19 June, General Thieu became the new Chief of State, while Marshal Ky was appointed the new Prime Minister. At the time, this latest saga in the "revolving door" government of South Vietnam gave little cause for confidence to the U.S..¹³ William Bundy recalled that the new combination of Thieu and Ky "seemed to all of us the bottom of the barrel, absolutely the bottom of the barrel."¹⁴

With the war situation reaching yet another critical point and the need for a quick decision on troop reinforcement, Johnson decided to send McNamara to Vietnam for a meeting with Ambassador Taylor and Westmoreland. The purpose of the trip, however, was not to determine whether troops should be sent or not, rather it was to determine how many troops should be sent. Accompanied by Henry Cabot Lodge, appointed to replace Taylor in August, and General Wheeler, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, McNamara arrived in Saigon on 16 July. On the 17th, McNamara

received a surprise cable from Washington informing him that Johnson had decided to approve the 44 battalion request and that he was to return immediately. In effect, no real debate had taken place and Johnson had essentially made the decision on his own. The announcement of the escalation of ground forces was not made until the 28th, largely for domestic political reasons.¹⁵ The more remarkable aspect of this decision in July with regard to the ROK component of the reinforcement was that the division had not yet been approved by the National Assembly. It would come soon enough (13 August), but the sequence of events and decisions just outlined gives credence to criticisms that decision-making in Korea was autocratic and the National Assembly existed to merely rubber stamp Park's decisions.

As U.S. forces poured into Vietnam, combat operations also intensified. A series of major Brigade sized operations began in August and by October, the 1st Cavalry Division was in-country to conduct the innovative helicopter assaults which came to symbolize the war.¹⁶ As the operational tempo picked up, the need for the ROK division became more acute. MACV informed PACOM that unless the ROK division was deployed by 1 November, a U.S. division would have to be sent instead.¹⁷ Provisions were made to send the 25th Infantry Division from Hawaii, but Korea came through when two Army regiments and a Marine brigade were deployed in October.

U.S.-ROK

If one event could symbolize the new relationship emerging between Korea and the United States, it was Park's state visit in May of 1965. To the extent that the July decision to escalate the war had largely been in Johnson's personal hands, the decisions by Korea to finalize the normalization treaty and to send troops to Vietnam had been orchestrated closely by Park. The personal relationship between these two men was to be cemented even tighter by Korea's explicit and significant participation in the war. Dean Rusk recalled later that "there was a personal rapport between President Johnson and President Park."¹⁸

The two dominant topics for discussion were the normalization treaty and the Korean contribution to the war. The priority for the U.S. clearly was the treaty since the escalatory decisions for the war had not yet been made. The "paramount reason" for Park's visit, wrote James C. Thomson in a memo to Johnson on the day of Park's arrival, was to seek "the strongest possible indication from us, both through our courtesies to him and through tangible evidence of continuing U.S. assistance, that we have no intention of abandoning Korea to Japanese control in the wake of a Japan-Korea settlement." (emphasis in original). From Washington's perspective, Park deserved whatever reassurances in words and deeds that the U.S.

could provide. because "Parks's determination has been the chief ingredient" to the Japan-Korea settlement.

With regard to the troop issue. Thomson stated "The GVN [Government of Vietnam] has now asked for further Korean troops. [the formal request was actually not made until 14 June] It is our judgment that a decision on such additional forces should be delayed until Park overcomes the acute problems he currently faces in pushing through a Japan-Korea settlement."¹⁹ As part of the package of reassurances. State requested Johnson's approval of and announcement as part of the joint communique, that a \$150 million Development Loan would be provided. In forwarding the State request. McGeorge Bundy and Thomson wrote.

Although it is unusual to cite a specific figure in connection with such a visit. both Embassy Seoul and the various Washington agencies are strongly convinced that Park has urgent need of such a quantified commitment in order to cope successfully with the acute fears of his opponents and of large sections of the Korean people that we are on the verge of abandoning their country to Japanese control.²⁰

Park's own priorities were apparently in accord with Washington. But. the intensification of domestic opposition to the treaty would force him to decide at the end of July that the division for Vietnam would be pursued first. This change of priority. to be covered in further detail and in context later. is significant. but the motives must remain conjectural. Simply put. by committing the nation to a Vietnam "crusade." Park hoped to undermine popular opposition which remained monolithic in

their protest against the treaty and the troop bill. The war would serve to whip up patriotic fervor and drown opposition to the treaty. In the end, the strategy worked, but with a twist Park probably did not anticipate.

The White House also prepared for some arguments concerning two issues of long standing. The first was the possibility of a forced reduction of the ROK Army with partial withdrawal of U.S. forces in Korea. As we have seen, the option to reduce the ROK Army had been considered since 1961 as part of a comprehensive plan to channel more aid money to economic development. U.S. position on the issue was not to reassure Park that these options were dead, rather to state that U.S. "commitment to [ROK] defense is absolute under the 1954 Mutual Defense Treaty, and that we would certainly consult with them on any changes in force levels which might be dictated by our regional and global requirements." The second issue concerned the MAP transfer program which Park wanted delayed to a significant degree. As noted earlier, the program had been suspended for 1962 and 1963, but it was now back on track. Again, the U.S. position on the issue was ambivalent and vague: "Although we have delayed and softened certain aspects of this program, we cannot meet the Korean request in toto but are willing to indicate in the communique that certain adjustments have been made in order to ease the impact on the Korean economy." (emphasis in original). The cautious if not

ambivalent policy stance pre-planned for Park's visit on these two issues would quickly be reversed when the decisions for escalation along with Korean troop commitments began to dominate the White House.²¹

Two private meetings were conducted between Park and Johnson during the visit. A careful perusal of the records of the meetings show the intimate and complex ties which were developing rapidly among the issues of the treaty, the war, ROK troops for Vietnam, ROK security and U.S. aid. Of further significance is that although Johnson had made a direct request for a division of ROK troops for Vietnam, Park refused to give a firm commitment while giving Johnson sufficient hints that such a contribution could be highly possible. By maintaining an element of uncertainty, Park was obviously using the troop issue as a leverage to get U.S. concessions on the key issues discussed above as well as others. A fairly full reproduction of the "Memorandum of Conversation" from the first meeting on 17 May will illustrate this more directly.

President Johnson said that the U.S. planned to extend all possible aid to Korea. It planned to keep its troops there, and no reduction of troop strength was contemplated...

President Johnson congratulated Park on the happy progress of the Korea-Japan negotiations...He felt that it was due to Park's leadership that things had been going so well...*He felt that conclusion of the Korea-Japan treaty would also assist our mutual effort in Viet-Nam.* President Park said he felt that the Korea-Japan negotiations could be concluded within a month...He said...certain irresponsible people...were trying to block the

negotiations, but he felt his public relations and other efforts would ensure conclusion of the agreement.

President Johnson congratulated President Park on his assistance in the struggle in Viet-Nam, and said, with reference to that aid, that we would keep in Korea a military strength equivalent to that at present so that...Korean security would not suffer.

President Johnson then emphasized how much more difficult it was now to get aid through the Congress...He said that the 2,000 Korean troops that had been sent to Viet-Nam in his opinion had helped save the aid bill in Congress. He asked President Park whether he felt additional Korean troops could be sent to Viet-Nam from Korea. President Park stated that the Korean Government would have to study that matter. The people in Korea were worried whether they might not invite further activity from North Korea if they weakened the line by sending too many troops to Viet-Nam. However, he said that *he personally would like to send more troops to Viet-Nam*. President Johnson then asked President Park if he could send one division...President Park repeated that...he could not make a commitment on it at this time.

President Johnson said he wanted to tell the Korean Government that aid would be assured to that country and that the U.S. would finance essential imports and development loans, technical assistance, and food for peace...

President Park said he hoped very much that there would be no indication from Washington that there would be any withdrawal of UN troops from Korea. This sort of talk made it very difficult for him to help in Viet-Nam...

...The President concluded by repeating the hope that Korea would increase its commitment [to Vietnam] to one division.²² [emphases mine]

The MAP and force level issues were further developed during the second meeting on 18 May. Regarding the MAP Transfer program, Park mentioned his earlier discussion with McNamara and the Secretary's promise to keep it "under review." Park then requested that "he would like the President, too, to keep it in mind." Johnson's response was "that he was familiar with

the program" and that "he would be happy to make the gesture of eliminating this requirement but this would lead to trouble with Congress. He said that he understood the difficulty, however, and that we would be as understanding as we could." On the troop level issue, Park indicated that the ROK Army was as much part of the U.S. security structure as it was Korea's thus further leading Johnson to believe that part of it could be used in Vietnam.

President Park said that the Republic of Korea had 600,000 men in its armed forces. These men were well-trained and well-disciplined. *He wanted President Johnson to realize that these forces really formed part of U.S. forces ready to fight against Communism.* In a fight they would be with the United States; but at the same time they were dependent on U.S. assistance.

The President said that President Park's assurance was very heartening. The President emphasized what he had said the day before; that the action the Koreans have taken in sending forces to Viet-nam is not only help to us in Viet-Nam, but also on Capitol Hill.²³

Two developing trends are apparent in these conversations. One is the increasing constraints which Johnson seemed to have felt in dealing with Korea as a result of the war. The decision for the dramatic escalation of July had not yet been considered, but NSAM 328 from early April clearly had made ROK combat troops, at least in regimental strength, an integral part of the military plan. Concessions of a sort regarding U.S. force levels and aid, differing significantly from the recommendations made by Thomson and others, are already apparent. Park, on the other hand, seemed to have sensed

Johnson's constrained position and, by injecting an element of uncertainty in his commitment to Vietnam, developed a bargaining leverage. The Japan-Korea treaty could only strengthen this leverage since Johnson seemed far keener to get it concluded. That Park shared this position was a bonus. The cards were clearly in Park's hands and with the escalatory decision of July making the Korean division a must, his hand strengthened.

An after action report prepared by Thomson for Bundy on 26 May, which has been partially declassified, reflected Thompson's concern at what Johnson had implicitly and explicitly promised. "President Park's two days here were ceremonially flawless and mutually satisfactory. [three lines sanitized] It remains to be seen whether we gave too much in return for very little: everything depends on the Japan-Korea settlement (still on the tracks). If the settlement comes, the price was not at all too high: if it doesn't, we may have to resort to a tough Presidential follow-up [two lines sanitized]." Thompson's lack of realization that the settlement was as important to Park as it was to the U.S. is self evident. This general perspective, that a successful settlement would somehow incur an obligation of stronger support from the U.S. for Korea, is an important point. Combined with the additional "debt" as a result of ROK troop deployments to Vietnam, the U.S. would reverse many policy positions regarding Korea. This

process was not lost on Park and he did not miss the opportunity.

ROK reinforcement for Dove Unit Apr-Jun 65

On 1 April, as the NSC was deciding on NSAM 328, the ROK Defense minister made a visit to Vietnam to inspect the recently deployed Dove Unit. A week earlier, the South Vietnamese Government had requested the dispatch of two medium transport ships (LST/LSM). Upon the Minister's arrival, the Dove Unit commander also forwarded a request for additional construction and security forces to allow the Dove Unit to be independent from U.S. or Vietnamese forces for local security of its areas of operation. After his return a decision was reached in consultation with the ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to fulfill the requests. The reinforcement would consist of two LSM ships and 460 men (106 construction troops, 205 man security company and 149 men to crew the ships).

A bill for the deployment was passed by the Cabinet Council on 3 June and was submitted to the Defense Committee of the National Assembly on the 16th. Three reasons were put forth by the Defense Minister to justify the additional deployment:

- (1) The Dove unit was involved in complicated and large operations which required recurring support from U.S. and Vietnamese forces. The list of projects was constantly increasing and clearly the unit was unable to complete them at

existing strength levels; (2) Although the Dove Unit contained a battalion of infantry to provide organic security, it was insufficient to provide for all security needs at base, construction and transportation sites; and (3) Due to increased VC activity, many coastal roads were closed and the two LSMs requested by the GVN were needed to transport supplies and evacuate refugees. The requirements for construction and security troops were neither excessive nor unreasonable. In addition, they were neither the result of U.S. pressure on the Vietnamese nor a direct request by the U.S.. The troop reinforcement was simply a request by the ROK field commander for additional resources to fulfill his missions. The Defense Committee passed the bill with a vote of 12 for, 1 against and 1 abstention on the 17th.²⁴

The bill was spiritedly opposed by the new opposition Mass Party (*Minjungdang* - formed on 3 May through a merger of the Civil Rule and Democratic parties and formalized on 14 June through ratification by the new party's first national convention²⁵) when it was submitted for a plenum vote on the 18th. The chief argument was stated by one Mass Party Assemblyman. "Not only is it beyond international moral principles for Korea to send a reinforcement to Vietnam when even American public opinion was turning against their Vietnam policy, but no benefit can be foreseen for Korean foreign

relations. This reinforcement bill is opposed for the sake of national prestige and the future of Korea."²⁶

Such rhetoric, of course, fell on deaf ears among the majority party (DRP) members of the Assembly. Beside, this was a minor affair compared to the brewing battle over the treaty which would be formally signed on the 22nd and the issue of the combat division, inklings of which had been reported by the Korean media after Park's U.S. visit. A formal Vietnamese request for the division had also been received on the 14th. The bill passed with a vote of 96 for and 2 against and the reinforcement deployed on the 27th.

ROK-U.S. planning for the first ROK division

As early as 12 May, the prescient ROK Marine Commandant had anticipated the eventual deployment of combat forces to Vietnam and had directed his staff to devise a deployment plan. However, real planning by the Defense Ministry only began after the Park trip. On 2 June the ROK Defense Minister Kim Sung Eun met with General Howze (Commander in Chief, UN Command and Commander, U.S. Forces Korea) to disclose the ROK Government decision to send an Army division minus one regiment (out of three) and a Marine brigade. He also disclosed a number of conditions and requirements, a list which would grow as the negotiations continued. These included: (1) pay raise for the ROK armed forces across the board, not just for those going to

Vietnam²⁷: (2) to discontinue any plans for withdrawing U.S. forces from Korea since a Korean division was being deployed to Vietnam; (3) not only suspend the MAP transfer project, but increase U.S. aid; and (4) for the U.S. to establish an "unofficial" fund to provide pension payments to families of soldiers killed and wounded in Vietnam.²⁸

For the next two weeks, Washington's focus regarding Korea turned to the treaty, which was on the verge of being signed. However, the war began to dominate policy deliberations as reports of the VC summer offensive began to come in along with Westmoreland's 44 battalion request (7 June). The impact of a certain U.S. escalation of the war on U.S. Asian policy was not lost on Thomson who sent a memo on the subject to Bundy on 11 June. Entitled "The Far East Costs of Our Vietnam Policy," it was not the first memo on the topic written by Thomson who began his memo by stating.

Last November 28 [1964] I wrote you a paper on current Vietnam planning which closed with the following statement: "What I fear most of all in this juncture would be our move onto a policy track in Vietnam that could cripple the new Administration and tarnish its bright promise before we ever begin to move on our agenda of more vital business in the larger world beyond Vietnam." I expressed the same concern again on February 19th... "I seriously question the higher price we may be forced to pay for Vietnam in Asia and in our relations with most of the rest of the world over the next decade."²⁹

Thomson proceeded to outline what was at stake for each major Asian country, beginning with Japan and followed by Korea. Although most of the paragraph dealing with Korea remains

classified. one can infer from the unclassified sentence that Thomson feared the possibility of the treaty being derailed by U.S. escalation in Vietnam. He wrote, "Korea: After thirteen years of unsuccessful groping toward a settlement with Japan -- the soundest underpinning for the security of both countries -- that settlement is in sight. [10 lines sanitized]" He concluded ominously. "In sum, despite reports of exuberance over our new 'firmness' and 'determination' from such disparate clients as Genral Pak, the GRC, the Lao, and the Thai and some Filipinos, a glance beneath the surface of this euphoria reveals some deeply troubling by-products which may haunt us for sometime to come." We can reflect today and conclude with relief that Thomson's full fears were not realized. However, the U.S. retreat from Vietnam in the 70's did bring about a crisis of credibility and resolve with Asian allies.

By this time, while no public announcement had been made that Korea was seriously considering the deployment of a combat division, the Korean media speculated seriously on its possibility. The *Hanguk Ilbo* (Korea Daily) reported on 12 June the extent of the VC summer offensive and worried whether the combined ARVN/U.S. forces could beat off the attacks. It went on further to speculate that if the VC forces were being forced back, "it is doubtful that Red China and Russia will only sit back and watch...The 'inevitability' of another Korean war in Vietnam is widely predicted." It ended the piece by noting that

the "war is being escalated. Will Korean combat troops be really sent to Vietnam?"³⁰ Two days later, Vietnam formally conveyed an official request for a combat division. The request was repeated on 23 June after Ky replaced Quat as the Prime Minister on June 19th.³¹

Back in Washington, McNamara announced at a press conference on the 17th that U.S. force would soon reach between 70,000 and 75,000 which included 20,000 combat troops.³² These were not new troops, but those already in the pipeline. McNamara's announcement was designed to show both the seriousness of the new military situation in Vietnam and the decisive action being taken by the U.S.. McNamara also stated that "Korean combat troops will be dispatched to Vietnam." UPI confirmed on the same day that "Korea will soon announce its dispatch of one combat division of 15,000 to help Vietnam..." These reports were duly printed by *Chosun Ilbo* the next day.³³

Were these announcements unintended leaks which upset the ROK government or were they part of a carefully devised public relations campaign? The best way to answer this question given the lack of personal reactions by ROK officials, is to put it in the context of the normalization treaty issue. The signing ceremony had been set for the 22nd, but Korea was wracked by large student protests on campuses and streets which included hunger strikes. "On June 21, the hard-pressed government ordered an early summer vacation for the thirteen colleges and

universities and fifty-eight high schools that were considered to be the centers of student movement." In addition to the students, the Struggling Committee continued with its own organized protests in the National Assembly as well as in the streets right up to the moment of the signing in Seoul. The day after the signing, all opposition members of the Assembly and leaders of the Struggling Committee conducted a 24 hour hunger strike.³⁴ The provincial *Maeil Sinmun* (The Daily published in Taegu) printed on the 18th.

Reports have it that Korean and Japanese working-level officials will make a final touch on the contents of the normalization pacts by today (Friday) in order that the pacts may be formally signed by next Tuesday [22 June]...

Frankly speaking, we are fed up with the Government's propaganda about the Korea-Japan normalization talks. We think the only proper thing left to do is to reveal everything in the talks...³⁵

Given the rising tide of at times hysterical opposition to the treaty, the ROK Government may have decided to leak the information about troops for Vietnam for two possible reasons. One is to divert attention from the treaty by providing a potential source of national rallying point. If the troop dispatch issue could quickly be turned into part of Korea's anti-communist and patriotic crusade in keeping with the earlier deployments, most of the Korean public would de facto become pro-Government. This, of course, would translate into further erosion of popular support for the opposition which was

against both the troop deployment and the treaty. The result would be erosion of popular opposition to the treaty as well.

The second possibility is contrary to the first. This assumes that the ROK Government wanted the troop dispatch to occur with minimal amount of difficulties, a reasonable and probably an accurate assumption. By leaking the announcement at a time when the country was largely subsumed by the treaty issue, far less attention would be accorded the troop issue. One Korean scholar later wrote, "In many respects, during the first debate on combat troops [the second assumed by the scholar took place in early 1966 over the deployment of a second combat division], national attention was focused on the Korean-Japanese normalization issue, and the Vietnam issue was overshadowed by the question of Korean-Japanese relations."³⁶ Whatever the reason, the "cat was out of the bag."

On 23 June, Defense Minister Kim again met with General Howze to present a 10-point request related to problems as seen by the Korean Government. Part of the rationale given to General Howze for the resolution of these points was the expected legislative battle when the troop bill was submitted to the Assembly. There was tremendous pressure by this time to get the Korean troops to Vietnam. State Department cabled the Seoul embassy on the 25th. "Would appreciate earliest your assessment of Defense Minister's requests...and your recommendations, keeping in mind that Korean IMAF

[International Military Assistance Force] troops urgently required Viet-Nam."³⁷ There followed three weeks of negotiations, records of which are not yet available, before the U.S. was able to offer a compromise list of concessions which was acceptable to the Koreans.

What were the Korean demands and what was the initial U.S. reaction? General Beach, who replaced Howze on 1 July later recalled.

The initial Korean bill (wish-list) was fantastic. Basically, the ROK wanted their troops to receive the same pay as the Americans, all new U.S. equipment for deploying troops and modernization of the entire ROK Army, Navy and Air Force. I told them with the Ambassador's concurrence that their bill was completely unreasonable and there was no chance whatever of the U.S. agreeing to it.³⁸

The ROK "wish-list" consisted of the following.

1. Maintenance of current U.S. and Korean force ceilings in Korea.
2. Equipment of the three combat-ready reserve divisions to 100 percent of the table of equipment allowances and the seventeen regular divisions...to avoid weakening the Korean defense posture.
3. Maintenance of current level of MAP funding.
4. Early confirmation of mission, base area, command channels, and logistical support for Korean combat units destined for Vietnam.
5. Establishment of a planning group to determine the organization of the division.
6. Provision of communications equipment to establish an exclusive communication channel between Korea and Korean forces in Vietnam.
7. Provision of transportation for the deployment and subsequent requirements for rotation and replacement of men and supplies.

8. Provision of financial support to Korean units and individuals in Vietnam, including combat duty pay at the same rate as paid to U.S. personnel, gratuities and compensations for line-of-duty deaths or disability, and salaries of Vietnamese workers hired by the Korean units.

9. Provision of four C-123 (small transport aircraft) for medical evacuation and liason between Korea and Vietnam.

10. Provision of a field broadcasting station to enable the Korean division to conduct psychological warfare and jamming operations along with providing Korean troops with news and entertainment programs.³⁹

The list is indeed imposing, but one common factor is clear. The focus of the Korean demands centered on military and security concerns, not economic. In contrast to the earlier deployments of essentially symbolic units, the deployment of a combat division composed of the best in the ROK armed forces significantly weakened the defensive readiness of the country. The gamble taken by Park was to use the division as a leverage to reverse several trends of U.S. policy which in his mind threatened to weaken the defensive posture of Korea. As already covered, these included U.S. force reduction in Korea, reduction of the ROK armed forces by redirecting aid to economic development, the reduction in total aid package and the MAP transfer project. From the U.S.'s perspective, much of the aid reduction would be made up by Japan once normalization was achieved. Given the unpopularity of this course in Korea, Park had no choice but to attempt to insure a constant if not increasing level of U.S. support. Such a course would provide

double advantage as Korea would receive aid from both Japan and the U.S..

In addition to insuring the security posture of Korea, participation in Vietnam would provide a major opportunity for Park and Korea to assert its influence in Asia along with a boost to its international prestige. That Park did this will be covered more specifically later. Given these considerations, the later charges of Korea sending mercenaries to Vietnam and that its primary motivation for sending troops was largely economical are unjustified. However, when negotiations were conducted for the second division in early 1966, clearly the economic angle assumed a greater role. One can understand this better if there is a realization that the deployment of the first division largely fulfilled the primary goals of security and international standing. It was the economic demands for the second division which compromised Korea's original goals in the eyes of the world and justly brought on charges of sending "guns for cash."

The U.S. reaction to the list in the summer of 65 was one of shock, but the exigencies of the war demanded a quick resolution. The ROK Cabinet Council had already approved the bill on 2 July and it was submitted to the National Assembly on 12 July where it was first taken up for committee hearing by the National Defense Committee.⁴⁰ In the meantime, the U.S. came up with a specific list of agreements and concessions on

the 10-point list. The initial response in late June consisted of the following (numbers keyed to the 10-point list):

1. No guarantees could be given except to reiterate what President Johnson told Park in May, that no changes to force levels would be made without prior consultation with the ROK Government.

2 & 3. Equipping the ROK divisions to 100 percent level would be dependent on MAP funding levels which is decided by Congress. At the moment, no assurances can be given that this item could be fulfilled. However, the deployment itself may prompt a change in MAP funding.

4. Early confirmation will be given as soon as it is decided by PACOM and MACV.

5. A planning group will be established immediately.

6. No exclusive communication equipment will be provided: U.S. system can be used.

7. U.S. will provide transportation, but some Korean vessels may have to be used.

8. Combat pay, especially at U.S. rates, cannot be made. But, overseas allowance was possible. U.S. is also willing to pay death benefits and disability allowances, but at rates established by Korean law on a one time basis only. U.S. will not pay for Vietnamese workers, but would support the Koreans if such a requirement was negotiated with the Vietnamese Government.

9. No special aircraft can be given, but scheduled U.S. aircraft flights will be open for Korean use.

10. Resolution on the broadcasting station may duplicate U.S. efforts already in progress therefore it will depend on a reassessment of the need.⁴¹

Clearly, the U.S. was playing tough, perhaps miffed at the audacity of the Korean demands. But additional concessions would be required if the ROK Government hoped to get the bill through the Assembly with minimal amount of problems and, even more importantly, gain popular support for the deployment by

reassuring the people that it would not jeopardize Korean security.

An editorial in *Kyonghyang Sinmun*, a Seoul paper, on 7 July expressed some of the reservations felt by the populace and law makers on both sides. What is remarkable is that it was written by a Cha Chi-ch'ol, an Assemblyman from the pro-Government DRP.⁴²

I have repeatedly emphasized in my writings for various newspapers and magazines the inevitability of sending more troops to Vietnam on the ground that the defense of Vietnam is as important a matter of joint concern for all free nations as the Korean War. At the same time I also urged greater sincerity of the U.S. toward our problems that should be settled before we send additional troops.

Needless to say, the heavy military commitment by Korea in Vietnam entails the possibility of expanding the war and giving North Korea...and China an excuse to resume [hostilities in Korea]...

...the recent reports of the shift of U.S. aid to Korea to long term loans, stop of delivery of surplus farm products...transfer of \$8 million of the defense burden to Korea after the Korea-Japan normalization, the imposition on the lean Korean Treasury of the financial burden for raising military pay rates, and the purchase of Japanese military supplies for the Vietnamese War, cannot be but a great shock to us.

As the U.S. military authorities acknowledge it, the current 600,000-man strength of Korean troops...is the minimum requirement for the defense of Korea and thus they cannot be pulled out even by a single man without a proper guarantee being given in exchange for it.

...any subtraction from our present level of armed strength for the sake of the Vietnamese War is unreasonable...

...some firm measures should be taken to reinforce the defense of the Korean front before we send combat troops to Vietnam...⁴³

The public pressure for U.S. concessions, possibly and likely organized by Park and the DRP, was a strong leverage against the U.S.. In the meantime, decisions were made concerning the details of the unit along with negotiations with the U.S.. From Korean sources, we know that the military aspect of the talks took place in a joint planning group which was organized as a result of demand number 5 in the 10-point list. The first meeting was held on 28 June and resulted in decisions concerning the size and composition of the division. The decision also included provisions for a further expansion of the Korean expeditionary force. Specifically, the decisions included the following.

1. The ceiling for reinforcement will be 60,000.
2. As a general rule, the division to be deployed and the units already in Vietnam will function as separate units. Support units will be organized and will be part of the 60,000 limit.
3. The division to be deployed will consist of an Army division (minus one regiment) and a Marine regiment. Their total strength will be 18,500.
4. The units will be organized into two separate units with the capability to perform independent operations.
5. The units will be filled to 100 % of current TO & E (Table of Organization and Equipment).⁴⁴

As deliberations in Washington were reaching a critical point regarding Westmoreland's 44-battalion request, the pace of the joint meeting picked up. The second, third and the fourth meetings were held on 6, 8 and 12 July.⁴⁵ The 12 July meeting also included a four-man liason team from MACV to

specifically address the issue of command relationship and the establishment of a combined headquarters.⁴⁶ The agreed upon strength included 13,939 men in the combat division (including 3,525 Marines), and a 3,415 men logistical organization.

Korean pressure on the U.S. continued and apparently reached a plateau on the 12th which resulted in additional U.S. concessions. On Sunday the 11th, the DRP members of the National Defense Committee, led by Cha Chi-Ch'ol, held an informal meeting to review the troop bill. The representatives concluded that the bill did not contain sufficient "quid pro quo" from the U.S. and decided to boycott the hearings for the bill.⁴⁷ This essentially prevented the bill from being forwarded to the general assembly for a plenum vote. The new U.S. concessions came soon enough on the 13th when Ambassador Brown was authorized by State to offer new concessions to "insure the prompt deployment of the Korean division."⁴⁸ Events in Washington were also rapidly coming to a head as McGeorge Bundy readied for a quick trip to Saigon under President Johnson's orders on the 16th. The new concessions included.

1. Suspension of MAP transfer project for as long as Korea maintained a substantial force in Vietnam.

2. U.S. agreed to offshore procurement from Korea for transfer items such as petroleum, oil, lubricants (POL) and construction materials listed for FY 1966. Afterwards, offshore procurements from Korea for transfer items will be determined on an individual basis.⁴⁹

The reason for the offshore procurement concession was based on comments by Koreans like Cha Chi-Ch'ol who criticized the level of economic windfall which Japan was enjoying from the Vietnam War. Cha had written on the 7th that.

...there must be a concrete agreement under which Korea is given the highest possible priority in supplying war materials to Vietnam in order to enable Korea to build a posture strong enough to win over the Communist through economic self-sufficiency. It is outrageous and unforgiveable in view of international morality that Japan...is given again [the first being the Korean War] a chance to amassing [sic] fortunes from Vietnam, while we are shedding blood there.⁵⁰

The concessions also had an important, if implicit, understanding that any budgetary savings resulting from the concessions would be used to give a pay raise to the civil and military services.

Amidst the growing protest campaigns by students and opposition politicians against the normalization treaty, the 51st Special Session of the National Assembly was convened on 14 July to address the treaty bill and the Vietnam troop bill. Due to the growing intensity and emotionally charged anti-treaty protest movement by members of the Mass Party, Park feared a head on collision between the ruling party and the opposition. Indeed, the first day of the plenum resulted in a melee. The *Chosun Ilbo* reported the drama the next day.

At 8:38 p.m. [14 July], when negotiations between the Government and Opposition parties...ruptured [after ten hours of talks], the Opposition lawmakers attempted to occupy the rostrum. Bu the ruling party solons beat them to it and protected the rostrum. While more than 90 Government and Opposition Assemblymen were engaged in

fisticuffs. Vice Speaker CHANG Kyong-Sun declared in only 1 minute and 30 seconds: "A bill of ratification for the Korea-Japan treaty and agreements and a bill of consent to the dispatch of one combat division to Vietnam have been submitted by the Government Monday [12 July], and they are hereby referred to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committees."⁵¹

After only two days of substantive debate in a week, Park met Madame Pak Sun-ch'on, the head of the Mass Party, on 20 July and mutually agreed to suspend the 51st Session and postpone the ratification debate. The session ended on the 21st.⁵²

While the special session was stillborn due to the treaty issue, the troop bill remained hostage to the impasse despite the new concessions made by the U.S. on the 13th. However, private negotiations continued while the media attempted to sensitize the public. The *Chosun Ilbo* printed on the 15th, "The current 51st extraordinary Assembly session is faced with two big issues: a bill of ratification for the Korea-Japan pact and a bill of consent to the dispatch of one combat division to Vietnam. While the former has been closed up, no active discussion, it seems, has been made on the latter." It continued on to point out the boycott by DRP members of the Defense Committee and listed their demands as: (1) immediate suspension of the MAP transfer; (2) pay raise for the armed forces; (3) equipment modernization; and (4) offshore procurement from Korea of Vietnam bound supplies. *Chosun Ilbo's* interpretation was correct in assigning the principle motive of these conditions as aims at "further strengthening the defense

posture of the Korean armed forces, to fill the gap created by the dispatch of one combat division to Vietnam."⁵³

On the 16th, Defense Minister Kim, General Beach and Ambassador Brown held another meeting where additional details of the deployment and U.S. concessions were tabled. No documentary evidence is yet available on the details of this meeting, but two secondary sources indicate that Brown gave a letter which strongly stated that U.S. force levels would not change and should there be a proposal for redeployment of these forces, it would be discussed in full with the Korean Government beforehand. Assurances were also apparently given that sufficient resources would be allocated to improve and modernize the equipment for all active and reserve Korean forces.⁵⁴ To describe the U.S. position as "desperate" by this time would not be an overstatement. Johnson's final decision for approving Westmoreland's request was only a day away and Bundy was in Saigon to get a final input from the field.

Pro-deployment articles began to appear in pro-government papers the very next day, like this one by retired Lieutenant general Choe Sok.

One of the most important issues of our foreign policy at present seems to be the dispatch of combat troops to Vietnam...

We should bear in mind the historical fact that Columbia, Turkey and our other allies came to our aid to help us repel the Communist aggression. Free Vietnam. Free China. Thailand and the Philippines are our allies who share a common destiny. Their trouble is ours and our trouble is theirs as well...

Of late, some politicians tend to view Korea within the narrow purview of Korea's national interests, without noticing the greater theme of international politics -- struggle between free democracy and Communism...should our policy toward Vietnam fail...Communist aggressors...will start another aggressive war in Korea...

We should frustrate such tactics of the enemy and crush MAO Tse tung's adventure in Vietnam...This is our most important task which is most in the interest of Korea...

I hope the National Assembly will deal with this issue from a patriotic and suprapartizan point of view and judge wherein our true national interest lies.⁵⁵

As we have already seen, the suspension of the 51st Assembly meant no immediate action could be taken by the Koreans. The pace of the U.S. escalatory decision quickened in the latter half of July when Johnson had all but decided on the 100,000 increase necessary to fulfil the 44 battalion request. A necessary part of the decision required firm commitments from key allies to support the new policy with combat troops. Just two days before Johnson publicly announced his decision on 28 July, Australian Prime Minister Menzies was in Washington. In a top secret memorandum to Johnson, Bundy reminded him that a message had been sent to Menzies on the 25th to explain the escalation and that a "most earnest consideration" be given to increasing Australia's contribution of troops to Vietnam. That Australia was unable to do so gave an extra measure of urgency to obtaining the ROK division.⁵⁶

Priority Reversals

On 29 July, General Beach made an unusual nationwide speech in Korea where he formally announced U.S. plans for modernizing the ROK reserve divisions. In a coordinated manner, the 52nd Special Session was convened by Park on the same day to consider the two controversial bills. Clearly, the treaty bill remained the most problematic and occupied most of the opposition focus on anti-government activities. Park, however, wrote to Johnson on the 29th in response to a letter from Johnson which explained the new U.S. policy. "[I] will completely support the U.S. policy in Vietnam and in order for Korea to send a combat division to Vietnam, the Korean government will get the concurrence of the National Assembly by no later than mid-August."⁵⁷ Also on the 29th, the ROK Ambassador to the U.S. paid a visit to the White House and spoke with Chester Cooper, one of the Asia specialists in the NSC. Cooper noted in his follow-up memo on the meeting to Bundy that Ambassador Kim came "primarily to discuss the Vietnam situation." After expressing his approval of Johnson's speech the day before, the Ambassador raised an issue of obvious importance. On instructions from Park, the first was the possibility of the Vice President with a "few Senators and a couple of Congressmen" making a visit to Korea on 1 October (Armed Forces Day). Such a visit, of course would be of immense symbolic value to reaffirm the U.S.-ROK tie despite the treaty

with Japan and an opportunity for the Vice President to express his personal gratitude for the ROK contribution to the war effort. Now it was Cooper's turn to focus on a more immediate concern. Cooper wrote.

I asked the Ambassador when he thought the ROK division would clear through the Assembly. He felt it would be a matter of another two weeks. He asked whether we expected more than one division and how soon we wanted the troops. I told him that with respect to the former, he should ask DOD; with respect to the latter, the sooner the better.⁵⁸

Ambassador Kim concluded his visit by telling Cooper "that if there was anything else we wanted from his government, we need 'but ask.'"

The Ambassador's messages were clear. The Korean troops will deploy and more might be available. But, Korea needed, rather, Park needed, further demonstrations of U.S. commitment to Korean security to reassure the people and to insure his own domestic support. Two omissions give further insight into the Korean perspective at this time. The lack of discussion on further U.S. concessions for the troops could only mean that Park felt that all the concessions that could be gotten at the moment had been received and these were sufficient to stabilize the Korean defense posture. But, the possibility also existed that further concessions might be gotten after the deployment perhaps with the lure of a second division. The second omission is the lack of discussion on the normalization treaty ratification. Park was already thinking in terms of the combat

division first and treaty second. Such a sequence could make the treaty passage easier since overt opposition to the troop deployment among the public did not yet materialize.

Undoubtedly, the immediate concern for the U.S. was to get the division as quickly as possible even at the cost of delaying the ratification of the treaty. An Asia status report for Bundy on the 31st confirmed this as Thomson, Cooper and Don Ropa (replacing Forrestal) wrote. "Pak has decided to move on the Vietnam division first, the Japan-ROK ratification second, in the new Assembly session. This will probably assure troops for Vietnam but may seriously endanger either the ratification or parliamentary government in Korea."⁵⁹ The lack of further comment on this possibility in the memo can only be interpreted as a willingness by the NSC staff to accept the situation. The war was clearly reversing many priorities and one casualty of the new escalatory policy might be the treaty. When renewed pressure for the ROK division grew from MACV and Congress the following week, the new priority was confirmed. Early August, MACV had sent a message declaring that if the ROK division was not forthcoming shortly, plans must be made to send a U.S. division instead due to the rapidly deteriorating military situation.⁶⁰ At an NSC meeting on 5 August, McNamara reported that "In both the Senate and the House [Foreign Affairs] Committees, there is broad support [for the new policy], but this support is thin. There is a feeling of uneasiness and

frustration. There is criticism of our allies for not helping more in Vietnam."⁶¹ Of course, the best possible outcome would be to get both approved as quickly as possible. This in fact is what happened.

Japan-ROK Treaty

After the 52nd Special Session was convened on 29 July, Park also formed the Special Committee for Deliberation on Ratification of the Japan-ROK Treaty instead of relying on the standing committee on foreign affairs. It was a larger body consisting of 28 members with 17 from the ruling DRP, 10 from the opposition Mass Party (MP) and one independent. The special committee was agreed to by the two sides, but for diametrically opposed reasons. The DRP's motivation was to create the impression that concessions had been made to the opposition party. In addition, the special committee would also preempt any demands by the opposition for the creation of separate subcommittees which could drag out the debate interminably as they examined each treaty issue separately. For the MP, greater representation in one larger committee would make it easier to use parliamentary delaying tactics such as filibusters, lack of quorums and prolonged debates, to defeat the bill.⁶²

The situation for the opposition became precarious when on 28 July, Yun Po-sun, leader of the more militant minority faction in the MP, resigned to force a dissolution of the

National Assembly. Under existing Korean law, Yun lost his membership in the Assembly with his action. The opposition became split as the majority faction was clearly willing to engage in the special committee debates. Pressure from Yun, the minority faction, the Struggling Committee and a new organization, the Consultative Council made a proper debate extremely difficult.⁶³

On 11 August, less than an hour before midnight, the DRP members of the special committee "in a lightning coup taking less than one minute, amid confusion, forcibly concluded the debate and won approval of the ratification bill."⁶⁴ The official Assembly history of the event prosaically reported the event, but noted that the passage of the motion with 16 votes by DRP members could not be overturned.⁶⁵ The following day, after a party caucus, 61 MP members of the Assembly resigned and walked out to protest the legislative coup. The now "one party" Assembly proceeded with the ratification vote on the 14th and passed it with a vote of 110 for and 1 abstention.⁶⁶ The immediate public reaction was unusually subdued. The Seoul embassy reported, "Although [a] small student rally at Korea University and indoor meeting by Save-the-Nation Council [Consultative Council?] reportedly took place during the day, there were no significant incidents outside Assembly and [the] city appears calm."⁶⁷ However, angry and violent protests by politicians and students soon resumed, and by 26 August, Seoul

was so wracked by them that a decree of "garrison state" was declared and a division of troops brought in to ruthlessly crush the demonstrations.⁶⁸ The next day, the education minister and the president of Seoul National University were replaced, presumably due to their lack of control over student activism. On the 28th, Yonsei and Koryo universities were closed.⁶⁹ By October, order was restored and Korea awaited the ratification of the treaty by Japan.

The Troop Bill

While the nation and the Assembly convulsed over the treaty issue in August, the Vietnam troop bill was also debated. To say that that the debate was conducted in a vacuum may be an oversimplification, but it clearly was overshadowed by the treaty issue. The consent bill was submitted to the National Defense Committee on 3 August which accepted the now revised agreement with the U.S. and debated it for four days. The bill was approved by the committee with a vote of 12 to 2 on 7 August. Interestingly, one DRP member, Park Chong-tae, voted against (as he would do again in the plenum vote), and one member of the opposition voted for the bill.⁷⁰ In introducing the bill to the committee, Defense Minister justified the deployment this way.

The present situation in South Vietnam under Communist aggression has reached a new stage. This situation not only has a direct impact on the security of Southeast Asia, but to Korean security as well. The

deployment of a combat division will harden the anti-Communist bulwark in Asia and contribute to world peace.

The main opposing argument was vague and weak.

Some non-allied countries and members of the free world bloc hold a different view toward the dispatch of a combat division with a support unit. Therefore, wouldn't this deployment bring about unfavorable repercussions for our government?⁷¹

The focus of the debate remained security and international position.

When the opposition resignation and walkout occurred over the treaty bill, the way was open for the troop bill. The government wasted no time as it submitted the bill for a plenum vote on the 13th, a day after the walkout and a day before the treaty bill was submitted. After a spirited, but lopsided debate, the bill passed with a vote of 101 to 1 with two abstentions. The single opposing vote was cast by Assemblyman Park.⁷²

The debate which took place in the Assembly may be dismissed as nothing but a symbolic front for the passage of the bill by DRP. However, it is worth examining it in detail for two reasons. First, the focus of the issues raised were predominantly on the security impact of the deployment. Second and most revealingly, penetrating and revealing questions were raised about the nature of the war and whether it could be won. The most remarkable aspect of the discussion is that they were in large measure, identical to the realistic concerns raised by Goerge Ball in early July to oppose the escalation. This is in

keeping with the surprisingly realistic perspective with which the Koreans had been examining the war since early 1962. If Park shared some of the misgivings and doubts about the future course of the war, it further emphasizes the point that he saw the war more as a leverage to get U.S. concessions to improve Korean security rather than as a realistic attempt to halt Vietnamese communism. But, no evidence can be found to support this and it must remain speculative at the present.

The opposing arguments were posed in terms of questions. A sampling of them will demonstrate the point made above.

In order to participate in a war to a degree which may weaken national security will require a national referendum. To what extent does the government intend to participate? [Unfortunately, a question never raised in the U.S..]

Would this deployment constitute a violation of the 1954 Geneva agreement?

What other countries are actively supporting Vietnam and how many more divisions will be required in the future to bring victory? What is the mission of the Korean force? [A growing concern in the Congress as well and never satisfactorily answered. It only led to further large scale escalations in 66 and 67.]

If victory is not the objective, what is the ROK objective? [This may be the most relevant question of all since U.S. policy was to deny victory to the enemy, not gain victory.]

What are the government's thoughts on General Navarre's [French commander in 1954] pronouncement that victory in Vietnam was impossible? [A point also raised by Ball, that the French experience in 46-54 demonstrated that U.S. could not hope to defeat the Vietnamese insurgency.]

What level of Vietnamese support can we expect and what sort of specialized training will our troops receive?

[Two issues raised in the U.S., but hardly satisfied. Counter-insurgency training for U.S. and Vietnamese troops were mouthed, but never implemented effectively.]

The respective positions of the U.S. and ROK are entirely different. The U.S. can pull out anytime they decide to do so. But Korea, because it must not only balance itself between U.S.-Soviet relations but deal with neutral countries as well, cannot pull out without significant political costs. Are we ready to accept such a large gamble? [Perhaps overstated since Korea's participation and withdrawal in 1972-3 did not bring any significant repercussions with the international community.]⁷³

By the 15th of August, U.S. deployments in line with the July decision were in full swing. The arrival of three Marine battalions increased the total number of in country battalions to 21. Fourteen more battalions were scheduled for deployment in September and October to bring the final total for 1965 to 35 (including one Australian battalion). MACV, as mentioned earlier, was anxious to get the ROK division by no later than November 1st.

Soon after the passage of the bill, the ROK Army (ROKA) issued an order on the 19th to organize the unit and to announce a selection policy to fill its ranks with a very special group of officers and men. Although the original requirements might not be impressive, the amendment made by the First ROK Army (FROKA), which was responsible for organizing and training the unit, made sure only the highest qualified candidates were selected. An additional requirement was that every man had to be a volunteer. The selection policy is reproduced in full to show the extent which ROKA went to

organize a truly select group of soldiers who would represent Korea in this national crusade. The symbolic value, for international, but even more so for domestic consumption, is obvious.

Officer Selection Policy

1. Officers of Lieutenant Colonel rank and above must have combat experience. [ie Korean War veterans]
2. Commanders and staff officers must currently be occupying those positions and must have extensive experience.
3. Evaluation reports must select the highest scores.
4. Candidates must have high academic scores.
5. Level of physical fitness must be 2nd grade or higher. [exact standards unknown]
6. No record of punishment worse than reprimand.
7. Have more than one year to retirement.
8. Able to receive a security clearance.
9. Must have completed all training requirements for the current grade.

Enlisted Selection Policy

1. Must have the longest possible service obligation remaining.
2. The identity of the soldier must be confirmed. [Presumably by the police]
3. Must have at least finished elementary school.
4. Must have at least 13 months of service left (Enlistment can be extended for Vietnam duty).
5. Must have superior proficiency in their Military Occupational Specialty.

6. Non-Commissioned Officers [NCO], as much as possible, should have completed junior NCO training.

7. Must have a good family background (individuals who are alone and without relatives will be considered). [This cryptic criterion might be a reference to either political background or family connections in North Korea]

Additional Selection Criteria imposed by FROKA

1. Platoon leaders [Lieutenants] must have had at least six month experience. [In the U.S. Army most platoon leaders stay, on the average, about one year in position]

2. Platoon leaders will be, to the maximum extent possible, graduates of the Military Academy.

3. Staff NCOs, Troop NCOs and Squad leaders [junior NCO] must have completed division and corps NCO Academy.

4. All personnel must have at least 1st Class Marksman rating in common weapons [Expert and 2nd Class ratings are above 1st Class and common weapons refer to all small arms such as rifles, pistols, machine guns, grenade, mines, etc.]

5. No record for criminal offense or heavy punishment.

6. As much as possible those with experience in Tae Kwon Do.

7. None with flatfeet or night blindness.

8. Under 30 years of age. [Obviously it didn't apply to senior officers and NCOs]

9. At least 2nd Class Marksmanship rating in assigned weapon.

10. At least six month experience in current duty position for technicians.

11. Artillerymen must be graduates of the artillery school.

12. Drivers should be rated as Grade A. [the highest rating]⁷⁴

Selection criteria for the Marines were for the most part identical with the added condition that selectees had to possess a "high level of Marine Corps spirit and consciousness of the elite reputation of the Marines."⁷⁵ Selection and organization was completed by the end of August and training began in earnest in early September. Very little was to be left to chance as a meticulously planned 30 day training regime was implemented.

American anxiety in August resulted in further concessions after the passage of the bill to prompt the earliest deployment possible. These included.

1. No U.S. or ROK force reductions without prior consultation. (A repeat of earlier assurances to such)
2. An additional \$7 million for FY 1966 MAP funding to equip the three reserve divisions with equipment used by the active force.
3. The active units in Korea to be modernized in weapons, communications equipment, and vehicles.
4. For units deployed to Vietnam, the U.S. will provide equipment, logistical support, construction, training, transportation, food, overseas allowance, funds for legitimate noncombat claims brought against ROK forces in Vietnam, and replacement of equipment and supply losses not resulting from negligence.⁷⁶

As substantial as these concessions combined with the earlier ones were, one must keep in mind what the Koreans remained responsible for. They remained substantial and underlines the fact that the deployment was not an economic bonanza (as the agreement for the second division would be). First, although the reserves and remaining active units would

be modernized. no new units would be created to replace the force deployed. Since the ROK military budget was largely funded by MAP. it imposed a de facto ceiling on the size of the armed forces. Second. since death gratuity or disability pensions would be paid on a one time basis only. future costs associated with casualties such as health care and continued pension payments would be borne by Korea. Third. no offshore procurement guarantees were given beyond 1966 and only a limited list of items (POL products and construction material) were to be procured for 1966. One impact of this policy was that although food for the forces in Vietnam was to be provided by the U.S.. any unique Korean food which was only available from Korea. had to be purchased and sent by the Korean government. Fourth. the Koreans were expected to grant a pay raise to the civil and military service from funds saved and accrued as a result of the concessions. Fifth. no guarantees were given to expanded economic aid to fund the development plans initiated by the Park regime with the 1962 Five-Year plan.

Are later criticisms of "guns for hire" justified if we discount for the moment additional U.S. concessions made for the second division? The answer depends on one's point of view. but the open evidence suggests that the criticism is not fully justified. The overriding factor was security concerns. Given the pressure on the U.S. to send a large number of combat

troops quickly. Korea could have held out for additional guarantees and concessions as it received later if the primary motive was economic. It would be better to characterize the contributions to Vietnam as an opportunistic move by Park to take advantage of the corner into which the U.S. had painted itself in Vietnam to gain a leverage for strengthening Korea's security posture, to undermine opposition against the Japan-ROK treaty and to put Korea in a more influential regional if not international position. The normalization treaty and the Vietnam war assured, perhaps paradoxically, greater security, political power and economic prosperity. With such goals at stake, one cannot fault Park for pursuing either, because it launched Korea's economic miracle.

The deployment of the ROK troops was swiftly done starting in October with the last element closing on 29 October. A large send off ceremony was conducted in Seoul on the 12th to honor the "brave warriors." The newspapers concurrently began harping the theme of a "patriotic national crusade."⁷⁷ Approximately 18,000 troops were sent to join the 2,000-plus already in Vietnam. The last of the U.S. units closed on the 7th when the 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One) arrived. Westmoreland now had his "44-battalion" force.⁷⁸ Over twenty percent of that combat force, nine of forty-four battalions, were Korean, constituting a significant portion of the U.S. military effort in Vietnam.

U.S.-Japan: Vietnam factor

Although Ambassador Reischauer later recalled that both Kennedy and Johnson enjoyed amicable relationships with Japan during his tenure (1961-1966), because "Japan never quite qualified as a crisis area," by Spring of 1965, the Vietnam War had become a major bilateral issue.⁷⁹ At the government level, Japanese support for U.S. policy never waivered. The two objectives which Sato was pursuing took priority and both needed an amicable relationship with the U.S.. The two goals were: 1) preemption of any trade disputes with the U.S.. and 2) restoring Okinawa to Japan.⁸⁰ But the "Johnson Shock" of February 65 when ROLLING THUNDER was launched without any warning to Japan (although Australia, UK, Canada, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea and Taiwan had been briefed) embarrassed the government and focused public attention on the war.⁸¹ February also saw the disclosure of the Three Arrow Study, a plan for joint U.S.-Japanese military operations in Korea in the event of another war. It touched off a debate in the Diet over the use of American bases in Japan. The mutual security treaty stipulated that the use of bases in Japan for direct combat required prior consultation with the Japanese government. In February, Shiina "clarified" the government's interpretation of this rule as not requiring consultation if the bases were used for "routine supply functions" even for Vietnam. In March, Foreign Minister Shiina had to remind the

Diet that the use of the air bases in Okinawa did not require prior consultations since it was not part of Japan. By April, Sato and his cabinet accepted the U.S. position that the use of Japanese bases to support the logistical support of the war did not require consultation. "The result was that the United States never once asked for prior consultation throughout the whole war, and none was ever held."⁸²

Despite the government position, public outcry against the bombing and the later escalations increased. By April, *Beheiren* was organized as a citizen action group to organize protest movements across the country. The reasons for the intensity of the public reaction against the war were mostly humanistic. First, there was a level of empathy toward the North Vietnamese whose bombing by B-52s were reminiscent of the bombing in Japan. It was also easy to identify North Vietnam as the underdog. The pre-war generation compared the U.S. venture with Japan's own experience in China. The greatest fear, however, was that Japan might somehow be dragged into a war through the treaty with the U.S. and be caught in the middle of a Sino-American war which held the possibility of becoming a nuclear holocaust. On a more practical level, there was a wide spread belief that South Vietnam was a losing cause.⁸³

In late April and early May, sensing doubts in Tokyo over the progress of the war and the justification for U.S. involvement, top U.S. officials were sent to reassure the

Japanese. In Tokyo, popular demonstrations were directed against the embassy and by June, the additional police boxes and riot police stationed nearby in trucks made the place look like a "besieged camp." Henry Cabot Lodge and his wife stopped by on 24 April while on their way to Saigon to prepare for Lodge's second tenure as Ambassador. Walt Rostow, now the chief of the State Department's Policy Planning Bureau, made a longer ten-day visit to meet Japanese leaders, hold discussions and give speeches, largely on the Vietnam issue. Three top universities, Tokyo, Kyoto and Waseda cancelled his talks fearing student protests.⁸⁴ By mid May Reischauer was able to personally experience the impact of the protest movement. He wrote later,

The Vietnam situation had a clear impact on our next prefectural visit on May 11-15 to four prefectures in Kyushu...Everywhere we were met by thousands of friendly welcomers, but the Communist Party had decided to go all out to break up our trip. They managed to get all the universities...to withdraw their invitations...I remember one woman who replied to my smile by trying to spit on me. For Japan this seemed truly shocking...we decided to abandon [the prefectural visits] for the time being. Actually, we never resumed them.⁸⁵

For someone who was determined to improve U.S.-Japan relations, a task which "meant the most" in his life, the impact of the war was a bitter blow and the last year in Japan proved to be the most difficult. He later recalled, "...I was in Japan trying to minimize the bad effect of the escalation of the war in '65, '66. I wanted to leave in the summer of '65 simply because the situation had deteriorated because of the

war...[U.S.-Japan relations] got so much more difficult...[but] I did stay another whole year beyond what I wanted to do, or thought was wise..."⁸⁶ A Thomson-Cooper memo for Bundy on 26 May caught the mood in the White House.

Ed Reischauer has sounded a grave warning about the impact of our Vietnam operations on our relations with Japan. The atmosphere has evidently changed very markedly since the first days of the air strikes, and Ed is fearful that we may be thrown for a rather permanent loss as a result of aroused public opinion and its inevitable impact on the Government.

In these circumstances, we are especially worried about the effect of nagging bilateral irritants that keep cropping up...civil aviation and fisheries..."⁸⁷

Two weeks later, Thomson wrote as part of his memo to Bundy on "The Far East Costs of Our Vietnam Policy," that relations with Japan "have taken a severe downward turn since Sato's visit in January...The chief cause is Vietnam...Much that we have built up since 1961 is at stake -- and ultimately, of course, our relations with our richest and potentially strongest ally in the entire Far East..."⁸⁸ The signing of the Japan-ROK treaty on 22 June, arguably the key item in U.S. Northeast Asia policy, was greeted with caution. Bundy wrote to the President soon after hearing word of the signing.

Dean Rusk, on second thought, feels that it would be dangerous to attach your name to the Japanese-ROK settlement in the statements today, because of the possibility of backlash from Tokyo. So, on his recommendation I have agreed that the initial statement will be made in the Department of State. We will pick up the backgrounding in a day or so to show your own deep interest in the matter and how it has contributed to a settlement."⁸⁹

Reischauer's concerns were so great that when he returned to the U.S. for an extended working vacation in July and August, he shocked Vice President Humphrey by telling him that "he could not recommend a...Japan visit in present climate of U.S.-Japan relations [due to the fallout on Vietnam]."⁹⁰ By October, Reischauer was ready to blame the Japanese press for distorting the American policy in Vietnam and the nature of the war to the Japanese public. He later wrote, "It seemed to me that the Japanese public was being given a biased view of Vietnam, in which propaganda statements from hanoi were equated with muckraking from Saigon, with no effort to point out to the uninformed readers the difference between the two contrasting types of 'news.'"

On October 5th, Reischauer made what he considered his "worst blunder during my whole ambassadorial career." In a speech to the American-Japanese Society in Osaka, Reischauer angrily assailed a *Mainichi* and an *Asahi* correspondent by name and accused them of accepting North Vietnamese propaganda at face value.⁹¹ Through timely damage control in Washington and Tokyo, no lasting damage was done by the incident, but it was a clear indication of Reischauer's fear and consternation over the possible loss of all that he had been able to achieve in U.S.-Japan relations.

Were these fears and caution justified? Later analysis shows that it may have been overblown. Public opinion had

indeed taken on distinct anti-war and perhaps anti-U.S. overtones as public opinion polls conducted by the *Asahi Shinbun* showed, but there was a large and measurable gap between public concerns and the increasingly pro-American policies of the government. Combined with a culturally ingrained reluctance for citizens to become politically committed, a phenomenon existing in all modern bureaucratized states, but particularly so in Japan, and the lack of strong party identification by voters meant that the ruling LDP could afford to largely ignore public opinion. This was aided further by Sato's pursuit of two other issues nearer to the ordinary Japanese's heart, the return of Okinawa and continued economic growth. Japanese political scientist Royama Michio stated in 1984, "Vietnam was a big fire, but it was a fire on the other side of the river. So Sato could ignore it, knowing that it was a secondary issue for most Japanese."⁹²

Still, the Vietnam protest movement both limited and assisted Sato in his relationship with Washington. On the one hand, it made ratification of the normalization treaty more difficult, because the two issues became linked in the minds of the protesters when Korea ratified the troop bill in August. Reischauer's talk with Sato over the Vietnam difficulties in late August was "very disappointing, because he had the looming battle over ratification of the normalization treaty with South Korea too much on his mind to be concerned with other

matters."⁹³ On the other hand, Sato was able to use the protest movement as a leverage against the overblown fears in the U.S. to "justify both a small defense budget and the demand for restoring Okinawa, implicitly telling the Americans that if they objected too strenuously, the security treaty would be jeopardized and a cabinet might even topple, as in 1960."⁹⁴

U.S. interest in making sure the Sato cabinet stayed in power not only involved the normalization issue, but the war effort as well. The dramatic build up following July meant a corresponding increase in base activities in Japan where over 100 U.S. facilities were directly involved in the logistical operations. Japan also became a primary source for various supplies and services for the war. U. Alexis Johnson, who served as ambassador to Japan from November 66 to July 69, stated "Japan was vital to our efforts in Vietnam. It provided ports, repair and rebuilding facilities, supply dumps, stopover points for aircraft, and hospitals for badly wounded soldiers." Admiral Grant, CINCPAC, stated in December 1965: "without Okinawa we couldn't continue fighting the Vietnam War."⁹⁵

Okinawa was important not only as a major transit point for supplies and men, but also for antiguerrilla training. One estimate placed as many as 9,000 Green Berets in training at the height of the war in 69. Training was also provided for soldiers from Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan and the

Philippines. The Self Defense Force was not left out as over 1000 were sent yearly to observe the training.⁹⁶

Japanese participation took a more direct turn when Japanese LSTs were hired to transport supplies to Vietnam. Although the earliest contract is indeterminable at the moment, the first Japanese death in Vietnam occurred on November 2, 1964 when an LST crewmember was killed by a South Vietnamese policeman. By September 1966, the number killed had reached nine and over one hundred crewmembers had been wounded. The most astonishing thing about this little known aspect of the war was that all the vessels flew an American flag and were considered to be a part of the U.S. Navy's military sea transport service. The crew even wore American uniforms. By January 1967, nearly 1400 Japanese were working for the U.S. in this fashion.⁹⁷

Although much emphasis has been given to the economic benefits accrued by Korea from the Vietnam War, the impact on Japan was far greater. Various estimates by Japanese sources (MITI, Nomura Research Institute, Nihon Kangyo Bank, Sanwa Bank), direct and indirect benefits of the business generated by the war between 1965 and 1971 was over \$6 billion. The most crucial year was 1966, where estimates run between \$450 million and \$1.2 billion, because of the slump suffered by the Japanese economy in 1965 and 1966 recorded the first trade surplus with the U.S..⁹⁸ Historian Thomas Havens wrote in his incisive book,

Possibly the greatest long-term effect [of the war on Japan] was also the most ironic: halfway through the war Japan replaced the United States as the leading economic power in Southeast Asia, so that one of America's most reluctant allies ended up as the chief beneficiary of the eight-year war to save the Saigon regime.⁹⁹

The Japanese windfall was compounded with the normalization treaty. One estimate in October 66 stated that perhaps 50% of South Korean exports to Vietnam were reexports of Japanese goods, usually as components of Korean manufactured goods.¹⁰⁰

As it had in Korea, the Vietnam war protest movement became inextricably intertwined with the normalization treaty. Sato was particularly disturbed by the level of violence in the anti-treaty demonstrations in Korea. He decided in August to put off introducing the ratification bill in the Diet until the controversy in Korea had died out.¹⁰¹ The focus of the Japanese opposition to the treaty, led by the Left, lay in the Left's internationalist and Marxist analysis of the consequences of the war and not in racial or national bias (as in Korea). One argument focused on the dangers of Japanese capitalism dominating Korea (the main fear of the Koreans). Another focus was on the fact that the treaty did not recognize North Korea and thus would impede unification of the peninsula. The Left also saw the normalization as a move which would strengthen the Asian anti-communist bloc and thus deepen the gulf between East and West. And finally, when Korea decided on the combat division bill in mid-August, the protesters saw a link with the treaty. A statement by Kaya Okinori, the right-wing leader of

the LDP. in October 1965 that "the essence in the ratification of the Japan-Republic of Korea Treaty lies in confrontation against the world aggression of the communist camp" seemed to confirm the link.¹⁰²

An organization which symbolized the linkage was the Antiwar Youth Committee (*Hansen Seinen Iinkai*), which was founded on 30 August as an offshoot of the labor federation *Sohyo* and with the help of the JSP. Havens wrote that its purpose was "to mobilize young industrial workers to resist the normalization treaty and also the Vietnam War through a relatively egalitarian, decentralized organization in which workers would have much voice." The effectiveness of the *Hansen* was seen shortly when it drew nearly 3 million Japanese to various strikes, meetings and rallies on 13 November, a day after the treaty bill was "rammed" through the Lower House by Sato.¹⁰³

With the situation calming in Korea, Sato convened the postponed special session of the Diet (50th) on 5 October to debate the normalization treaty.¹⁰⁴ It was the same day Reischauer had made his Osaka speech which had the effect of drawing attention away from the controversial ratification whether intended or not. Just before the opening Sato hopefully stated that the treaty was not the end point but the starting point "to build up neighbourly friendship and accelerate Japan's Asian diplomacy."¹⁰⁵ The following week when British

Foreign Secretary Stewart visited Japan. Sato reiterated the theme by stating that "with the South Korea normalisation treaty coming into effect, Japan was now entitled to speak of world peace."¹⁰⁶ Sato was clearly trying to stretch the treaty as a mandate of a sort which Japan could use for pursuing an assertive and pacifist foreign policy to a doubtful public. Earlier, Sato had told Reischauer that the "greatest danger from [the] Government's point of view would be [the] opposition's attempt to link [the] ROK treaties [sic] with [the] Vietnam War."¹⁰⁷ It was essential that all possible measures be taken to make the treaty ratification as painless a process as possible.

Consciously or not, U.S. actions on two sticky issues in September helped to prepare the ground. First was the civil aviation problem on the issue of granting landing rights to Japan Air Lines in its attempt to establish a global route. Reischauer noted that the negotiations seemed "endless" and "had taken up a good bit of my time all autumn [1965]." The negotiations reopened on 13 September in Tokyo and Thomson was able to report to the President the next day that "We are closer to an agreement than ever before, and this would be a real help to our relations..."¹⁰⁸ A week later, in another memo, Thomson noted "It will be a stormy autumn, what with Vietnam agitation compounded by demonstrations against ratification of the Japan-Korea Treaty. We are still creeping

along toward agreement on civil aviation...Our secret weapon for the moment is a Rusk/Shiina letter to follow up on their Sept. 28th conversation in New York."¹⁰⁹ An agreement was eventually signed on 28 December and a relieved NSC staff wrote of the agreement as a "breakthrough" only second in importance to the exchange of the instruments of ratification of the normalization treaty.¹¹⁰

The other issue was Okinawa where steady progress was maintained toward eventual return of the island to Japan. Toward the end of September, a draft plan was drawn up to amend Kennedy's Executive Order to provide for a legislative election of the Okinawan Chief Executive instead of the existing system of legislative nomination requiring final U.S. approval. The importance of Okinawa to the Vietnam War effort had put a break on any short term plans for full restoration, but this was something Sato was willing to accept so long as measures were taken to show that progress was being made. One result of this was to allow Japan to increase its contribution of aid to Okinawa. Earlier in the year, Sato had made a politically valuable visit to Okinawa which Washington approved. Thomson wrote of the visit as "a considerable success. He has made good political capital both at home and in the islands, has a better understanding of the full strategic value of our installations, and wants to increase Japan's contribution to the islands' economic development."¹¹¹ At the 2 November meeting of the

Consultative Committee on the Ryukyus. Japanese aid of \$16 million was accepted smoothly in contrast to previous years when even \$2-3 million was haggled over.¹¹²

The Diet debate on the treaty began on 11 October and it seemed as if the Socialist and Communist parties were planning an "all-out opposition" to include obstructive tactics in the Diet and demonstrations in the streets.¹¹³ In keeping with the caution shown after the initialling of the treaty in June, Washington kept silent on the ratification debate.¹¹⁴ In answer to the opposition's daily demonstrations, a pro-government student group was even able to organize a pro-treaty rally attended by 1,600 students on October 23rd.¹¹⁵ The socialist Diet members continued to thwart the debate, but on the 12th, the Lower House, with an LDP majority, voted to ratify the treaty in a "one minute session."¹¹⁶ The treaty formally required a vote by the Upper House as well, but due to the peculiarity of the Japanese Constitution which grants superiority to the Lower House, the Upper House has no power to overturn a bill passed by the Lower.¹¹⁷

As in Korea, anti-treaty activism would continue for years, but even before the passage the Japanese business community had begun to queue up to apply for the \$800 million in grants, loans and export credits.¹¹⁸ A provisional estimate by the *Far Eastern Economic Review* showed that over \$200 million had been committed in economic deals with Japanese

companies, principally Mitsui and Mitsubishi, by May 1966.¹¹⁹ A new era in Japanese-Korean economic relationship had begun.

¹ Berman, Larry. *Planning A Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam*. (NY/London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982). A more recent work by Brian VanDeMark [*Into the Quagmire: Lyndon Johnson and the Escalation of the Vietnam War*. (NY/Oxford: Oxford Univ Press, 1991)] more correctly, in my opinion, treats the entire period of Nov 64 to Jul 65 as one process of closely connected decision making.

² Havens. *Fire*. pp. 29-32.

³ Reischauer. *Life*. p. 285.

⁴ Havens. *Fire*. pp. 42-48.

⁵ *Ibid*. pp. 81-82.

⁶ PP 3:411-412. 459-460.

⁷ Westmoreland, William C., *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Co., 1976). p.136. Hereafter referred to as *Soldier*.

⁸ *Ibid*. p. 140 and PP 3:413,467. The math involved in the "44 battalion request" was a bit more complicated in actuality, because it involved a division which had not been organized yet (the experimental 1st Cavalry Division to be equipped with sufficient number of helicopters to transport the entire division in the new air mobile concept) and withdrawal of certain units to reconstitute a strategic reserve for the Pacific (173rd Airborne Brigade deployed in May from Okinawa).

⁹ William Bundy Oral History. Tape 2. p. 29.
29 May 1969. LBJ Library.

¹⁰ Westmoreland. *Soldier*. p. 141. Westmoreland had also expressed his belief that some sort of national mobilization would be required, an action Johnson would not take.

¹¹ *Ibid* and PP 3:415.

¹² The most detailed account of Ball's views and his role in the policy deliberations of July 65 can be found in Larry Berman's *Planning A Tragedy*.

¹³ Westmoreland. *Soldier*. p. 138; Herring. *Longest War*. pp. 136-137.

¹⁴ William Bundy Oral History. Tape 2. p. 30.
29 May 69. LBJ Library.

¹⁵ Berman, Larry. *Planning A Tragedy: The Americanization of the War in Vietnam* (NY/London: W.W. Norton & Co., 1982), pp. 94-100.

Hereafter referred to as *Tragedy*. A memo from McGeorge Bundy to LBJ on 19 Jul is indicative of the domestic political concerns on the timing of the announcement:

...the timing of the message to the Congress is really the D-Day for the whole operation. If McNamara reports to you Wednesday [21 Jul], you probably do not wish to give an appearance of great haste in reaching a decision, and for that reason I would recommend against going to the Hill before the first of the week [26 Jul]. But a delay beyond Monday [26 Jul] would seem to me to create too wide a gap between McNamara's return and the point of decision. If you agree, we might tentatively plan that you would see McNamara Wednesday [21 Jul], see him again with a view to decision Friday [23 Jul], and talk with the Congressional Leadership either Friday [23 Jul] or Saturday [24 Jul] to get ready for a formal message on Monday [26 Jul]. Memo. McGB to LBJ. Subj: Vietnam Planning at Close of Business. July 19. 19 Jul 65. NSF. Memos to Pres. Box 4. LBJ Library.

¹⁶ Westmoreland. *Soldier*. pp. 155-158.

¹⁷ Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 128.

¹⁸ Dean Rusk Oral History. Interview 3. Tape 1. p. 26. 2 Jan 70. LBJ Library.

¹⁹ Memo. JCT to LBJ. Subj: Your Meeting at 5 p.m. today with President Park. 17 May 65. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.

²⁰ Memo. McGB & JCT to LBJ. Subj: Development Loan Commitment to Korea. 14 May 65. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.

²¹ Memo. JCT to LBJ. Subj: Your Meeting at 5 p.m. today with President Park. 17 May 65. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.

²² Memcon. Park and LBJ. 17 May 65. NSF. Country. Korea. Box 254. LBJ Library.

²³ Memcon. LBJ and Park. 18 May 65. NSF. Country. Korea. Box 254. LBJ Library.

²⁴ *MND History*. p. 97.

²⁵ Kim. *Treaty*. p. 217.

- 26 *NA History*. p. 896.
- 27 This issue was raised by Kim on 18 May to President Johnson during the meeting between Park and Johnson. Kim stated that "the pay scale [of the Korean armed forces] was so low...that they faced serious difficulties in morale," and that the U.S. "should be concerned with this matter in considering these forces as its own troops." Johnson promised to look into it, but considering that "Congress was pressing for pay increases for our own armed forces," solution would be difficult. Memcon. LBJ and Park. 18 May 65. NSF. Country. Korea. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 28 Larson et al. *Allied Participation*. p. 124.
- 29 Memo. JCT to McGB. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.
- 30 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 6. No. 137 (12 Jun 65). p. 30 (*Hanguk Ilbo*. 12 Jun 65).
- 31 Republic of Korea. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Hangukgun Wolnam Pabyong Kwankye Munhunjip* [Collection of Documents Relating to the Dispatching of Korean Troops to Vietnam]. (Seoul(?): Asian Affairs Section. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. July 1973). pp. 54. 56.
- 32 PP 3:414.
- 33 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 6 . No. 141 (17 Jun 65). p. 8 (*Chosun Ilbo*. 17 Jun 65).
- 34 Kim. *Treaty*. p. 112-113.
- 35 *Press Translations: Korea*. Vol. 6 . No. 143 (19 Jun 65). p. 16 (*Maeil Sinmun*. 17 Jun 65).
- 36 Back. Kwang-Il. *Korea and the United States: A Study of the ROK-U.S. Security Relationship within the Conceptual Framework of Alliances between Great and Small Powers*. (Seoul: Research Center for Peace and Unification. 1988). p. 88.
- 37 Deptel 1347(Seoul). 25 Jun 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 38 quoted in Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 125.
- 39 *Ibid*. pp. 124-125.
- 40 *NA History*. pp. 899. 909.
- 41 Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 126.

42 Assemblyman Cha later became the head of President Park's personal security force. In October 1979, Park and Cha were killed by the director of the KCIA, Kim Jae Kyu [Eckert et al., *Korea Old and New*, pp. 370-371]. Cha's close personal relationship with Park raises the intriguing possibility that he may have been a propaganda foil during the turbulent period in the middle of 1965.

43 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 161 (10 Jul 65), p. 26 (*Kyonghyang Sinmun*, 7 Jul 65).

44 *MND History*, p. 99.

45 *Ibid.* p. 100.

46 The issue of command and control would not be finalized until the deployment was underway, but it assumed a symbolic significance. The Koreans did not want an arrangement where the ROK troops were directly controlled by the U.S.. Such an arrangement would open up the Koreans and the ROK Government to charges of playing a vassal state to the Americans. For Park personally, it would be an affront and a contradiction to the image he was trying to portray - a Korean crusade in assistance of a fellow Asian nation. The image was important for domestic and international reasons. MACV, on the other hand, wanted to have direct operational control which would allow their full integration into the overall war plan. Beside, planning for the ROK troops had always been done within the context of the overall U.S. campaign plan. When the final command relationship was worked out in Vietnam, it was designed to accommodate both parties. The formal document did not specify that ROK units were under U.S. operational control, but an informal understanding existed which de facto made operational control a reality. MACV directives and orders would in fact be written as requests, but would be honored by the Koreans as orders. Larsen and Collins, *Allied Participation*, pp. 131-135.

47 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 163 (13 Jul 65), p. 5 (*Seoul Sinmun*, 12 Jul 65).

48 Larsen and Collins, *Allied Participation*, pp. 126-127.

49 *Ibid.* p. 127.

50 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 161 (10 Jul 65), p. 26 (*Kyonghyang Sinmun*, 7 Jul 65).

51 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 165 (15 Jul 65), p. 8 (*Chosun Ilbo*, 15 Jul 65).

- 52 *NA History*, pp. 899-901. *Kim. Treaty*, p. 114.
- 53 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 166 (16 Jul 65), pp. 20-21 (*Chosun Ilbo*, 15 Jul 65).
- 54 Larsen and Collins, *Allied Participation*, p.127. *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 167 (17 Jul 65), pp. 8 (*Tong-A Ilbo*, 16 Jul 65).
- 55 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6 . No. 169 (20 Jul 65), pp. 13-15 (*Tong-A Ilbo*, 17 Jul 65).
- 56 Memo. McGB to LBJ, 26 Jul 65. NSF. Memos to Pres. Box 4. LBJ Library. Australia later decided to increase its force from a one battalion 1500 man unit to a two battalion task force of 4500 men in early 1966 (Larsen and Collins, *Allied Participation*, pp. 23, 90).
- 57 *NA History*, p. 906.
- 58 Memo. Cooper to McGB, 29 Jul 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.
- 59 Memo for McGB. Subj: The Week in Asia. 31 Jul 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.
- 60 Larsen and Collins, *Allied Participation*, p. 128.
- 61 Summary Notes of 554th NSC Meeting, 5 Aug 65. NSF. NSC Mtgs. Box 2. LBJ Lib ary.
- 62 *Kim. Treaty*, p.115. *NA History*, p. 906.
- 63 The Consultative Council of the People for Protection of the Fatherland was formed on July 31st and "became the most militant and powerful pressure group opposed to the Japan-ROK" treaty. It was an amalgamation of thirteen national organizations representing "students, lawyers, retired generals, former politicians, writers and artists, professors, Christian leaders and Confucian scholars and leaders of several patriotic organizations" who attempted to form a nonpolitical national front to oppose the treaty ratification. (*Kim. Treaty*, p. 114)
- 64 *Ibid.* p. 115.
- 65 *NA History*, pp. 906, 923-925.
- 66 *Ibid.* p. 907. The 111 members present consisted of 110 DRP and one independent Assemblymen. The abstention came from a female member of the DRP while the independent voted for the

treaty (Seoul Embtel 157. 14 Aug 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library)

⁶⁷ Seoul Embtel 157. 14 Aug 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library.

⁶⁸ *NA History*. p. 929 and *Kim. Treaty*. p. 116. According to Kim. "A decree of 'garrison state' can be imposed by a district military commander at the request of a local or provincial government in an emergency created primarily by some military contingency." The only difference with martial law was that civil bureaucracy continued to function and freedom of press was maintained.

⁶⁹ *NA History*. pp. 929. 986.

⁷⁰ *NA History*. p. 910 and Seoul Embtel 131. 7 Aug 65. NSF. Country. Box 254. LBJ Library. It may be entirely possible that Assemblyman Park played a foil, a "devil's advocate" if you will, within the deliberations much as George Ball had in the Washington deliberation on escalation in July.

⁷¹ *NA History*. pp. 909-910.

⁷² *Ibid.* pp. 907. 910-913 and *MND History*. p. 101.

⁷³ *NA History*. pp. 910-913.

⁷⁴ *MND History*. pp. 101-102.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 108.

⁷⁶ Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. pp. 128-129.

⁷⁷ See for example articles on departures, arrivals and initial experience published in *Tong-A Ilbo*: 12 Oct 65. pp.1&2; 14 Oct 65. p. 6; 15 Oct 65. p.3; 19 Oct 65. p.1; 23 Oct 65. p. 1; 26 Oct 65. p. 3; 28 Oct 65. p. 4; and 28 Oct 65. p.4.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 128. 131 and *MND History*. pp. 105-106. The two accounts differ slightly in number of troops and dates for departure. In total numbers, the MND history reported 17,890 (9th [Capital] Division (-): 9,850; Combat Support Command: 3,554; Army replacements for Dove Unit: 268; 2nd (Blue Dragon) Marine Brigade: 4,218 (see p. 102)). These units are reported as having deployed in four echelons on 3, 16, 20 and 26 October (pp. 105-106). Larsen gives two figures, 18,212 (p. 128) and 18,904 (p. 131) and deployments in three echelons on 29 Sep. 14 and 29 October (p. 128).

- 79 Reischauer Oral History. p. 5. 8 Apr 69. LBJ Library.
- 80 Havens. *Fire*. p. 25.
- 81 *Ibid*. p. 27.
- 82 *Ibid*. pp. 28-29.
- 83 *Ibid*. pp. 33-35. A good example of the Japanese public perspective of the war in late 1965 can be found in Omori Minoru. *Kita Betonamu Hokoku* [Reports from North Vietnam] (Tokyo: Mainichi Shinbusha. 1965), which is a collection of the Omori's (the foreign bureau chief of Mainichi Shinbun) reports from Hanoi during a two week visit. Omori presents an extremely sympathetic portrait of North Vietnam and its leaders. After characterizing the war as a political and ideological battle which was remote from the true desires of the people. Omori concluded that North Vietnam was the better place for the Vietnamese people and the solution to the war was for the U.S. withdraw and allow unification under North Vietnamese rule. (see in particular his conclusions. pp. 213-222)
- 84 Havens. *Fire*. p. 41 and Reischauer. *Life*. pp. 285-286.
- 85 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 287.
- 86 Reischauer Oral History. p. 10. 8 Apr 69. LBJ Library.
- 87 Memo. JCT/Cooper to McGB. 26 May 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library. The civil aviation issue was over an around-the-world route for Japan Air Lines via New York which the Japanese wanted desperately and the U.S. did not. The fisheries problem was over Japanese encroachment into U.S. fishing grounds and then exporting much of the catch to the U.S.. In retaliation, the Senate had recently passed a bill to increase import duties by 50% on fishery products of any nation which adversely affected domestic fishery conservation programs.
- 88 Memo. JCT to McGB. 11 Jun 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.
- 89 Memo. McGB to LBJ. 22 Jun 65. NSF. Memos to the Pres. Box 3. LBJ Library.
- 90 Memo. JCT. Ropa & Cooper to McGB. Subj: This Week in Asia. 16 Aug 65. Reference File "This Week in Asia." LBJ Library.
- 91 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 290.
- 92 Havens. *Fire*. pp. 48-53.

- 93 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 289.
- 94 Havens. *Fire*. p.140.
- 95 *Ibid*. p. 85.
- 96 *Ibid*. pp. 87-88.
- 97 *Ibid*. pp. 89-90.
- 98 *Ibid*. pp. 92-96.
- 99 *Ibid*. pp. 96-97.
- 100 *Ibid*. p. 104.
- 101 *Ibid*. p. 81.
- 102 *Ibid*. pp. 81-82. Memcon. Shiina and Rusk. Subj: Korea-Japan Settlement. 12 Jul 65. NSF. Country. Box 250. LBJ Library.
- 103 Havens. p. 81.
- 104 Koichi. Kishimoto. *Politics in Modern Japan*. (Tokyo: Japan Echo. Inc.. 1982 (2nd ed.)). p. 124.
- 105 *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 14 Oct 65. p.44.
- 106 *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 21 Oct 65. p. 108.
- 107 Tokyo Embtel 1063. 22 Sep 65. NSF. Country. Box 250. LBJ Library.
- 108 Memo. JCT to LBJ. Subj: Developments in the Far East. 14 Sep 65. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.
- 109 Memo. JCT to McGB?. Subj: Non-Vietnam Items for the Week that Was. 19 Sep 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.
- 110 Memo. JCT & Ropa to McGB. Subj: The New Year in Asia. 7 Jan 66. Reference File "The Week in Asia." LBJ Library.
- 111 Memo. JCT to LBJ. Subj: Developments in the Far East. 14 Sep 65. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.
- 112 Reischauer. *Life*. p. 293.
- 113 Memo. JCT to McGB. Subj: The Week in Asia other than Vietnam. 14 Oct 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.

- 114 AHSD 7:E5b.
- 115 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 4 Nov 65. p. 188.
- 116 Havens. *Fire*. p. 82. *Far Eastern Economic Review*.
18 Nov 65. p. 316.
- 117 Koichi. Kishimoto. *Politics in Modern Japan*. p. 52. *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 25 Nov 65. pp. 365-366. The Constitution stipulates that if the Upper House rejected a bill approved by the Lower, the Lower House's vote takes precedence. If the Upper House failed to take an action on a bill approved by the Lower, after 30 days, it is considered passed by the whole of the Diet.
- 118 *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 25 Nov 65. pp. 365-366.
- 119 *Far Eastern Economic Review*. 23 Jun 66. p. 598.

CHAPTER 8

December 1965 - March 1966

Vietnam Out of Control The Second ROK Division Controversy Crusaders or Mercenaries? The Brown Memorandum

Vietnam

By the middle of November 1965, Westmoreland began using his new force of 200,000 to take the battle to the enemy. The first major ground battle took place on 14 November in the jungles and hills of the Ia Drang Valley where the 1st Cavalry Division implemented the new tactics of the "air cav" for which they had been specially organized and equipped. The relative success of this battle seemed to validate the concept and for the remainder of the war, the American forces were hostage to the helicopter and the erroneous lessons of the Ia Drang.¹

Ia Drang seemed to confirm a new phase in the war where the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong forces were willing to accept a more conventional battlefield. The consequences for Westmoreland was that it would require the implementation of Phase II of the overall MACV war plan (not to be confused with the Phase 1 and 2 decision of December 1964). Phase I, which the 44 battalion plan was designed for, meant stabilising the military situation. Phase II involved taking the offensive, especially if the enemy seemed

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willing to accept conventional battles which would make them vulnerable to the overwhelming American firepower. But, Phase II also meant additional combat forces which the planning in July had identified as 27 battalions or 100,000 man.² But the unexpected speed and volume of the North Vietnamese infiltration in late 65 forced a reevaluation.

On 23 November, Westmoreland outlined the situation and the new requirements in a long cable to CINCPAC. His last paragraph outlined the additional forces needed.

We estimate that our minimum course of action (a ROK division and RCT [Regimental Combat Team] and two U.S. brigades as major units) will require a total add-on strength of approximately 48,000 (23,000 ROK), which includes 35,300 combat and combat support and 12,700 service support. Our preferred course of action (a ROK div and RCT and a U.S. div and brigade as major units) will add approximately 64,500 (23,000 ROK), which includes 47,200 combat and combat support and 17,300 service support.

The additional forces as seen by Westmoreland would raise the U.S./Allied strength to nearly 400,000 by the middle of 1967. As was true with the decision in July, the new requirements assumed an integral and major role for the Korean units. The requirement for both minimum and preferred courses required more than doubling the Korean combat force, from one division (9 battalions) to two divisions and an RCT (total of 21 battalions).

By early December, another concerted effort was made to find allied forces. A secret memo to the President only recently declassified shows that no country was off the list and a large

"money bag" was available. The document is worth reproducing in full to show that Washington was leaving no stone unturned to internationalize the war for international and domestic political reasons.

SECRET

Mac: [the memo was forwarded to LBJ 4 Dec 65]

12/4/65

You asked for an Optimist's View of where we can get combat forces for Vietnam.

A. We already have combat forces from - Korea 1 division.etc
(20,300)
Australia 1 battalion.
etc (1,400)
New Zealand 1 art. bn. &
tank troop (150)

B. With pressure, \$300-500 million to play with, and priorities on deliveries of cumshaw [gratuity], we should be able to get soon --

Korea	plus 2 div (35,000) (they would then have more these per thousand of population than we)
China(GRC)	5 div (80,000) (obvious implications in VN and re Chicoms)
Philippines	4 bn (4,500) (plus some engineeress)
Australia	plus 2 bn (3,000) (no cumshaw)
Thailand	1 div (17,000) (best used to help seal Trail in Laos)
Greece	1 bn (1,500); 1 tac fighter sqdn

C. On longer term (and longer shots, in some cases involving selling our souls and raising hob in various ways) are -

Turkey	1 div (17,000)
Germany	1 div (20,000)
UK	1 bn (1,500)
Israel	3 bn (4,500)
Spain	1 div (17,000)

D. Omitted for obvious reasons (though the capability exists) are

Canada	1 bn (perhaps to police a Laotian "barrier")
India	1 div (same)
Pakistan	1 bn
Lebanon	1 bn
Japan	3 bn
Argentina	3 destroyers
Brazil	4 destroyers
Chile	2 destroyers
Peru	2 destroyers

//signed//

John T. McNaughton⁴

(Asst Secdef for Intl Scty Assistance)

As noted earlier, ROK Ambassador Kim had "offered" a second division as early as 29 July in his meeting with Cooper at the NSC. The need for another division had been anticipated earlier in June when the ROK planning group for the first division had set a ceiling of 60,000 for forces to be deployed to Vietnam. Subsequently, Defense Minister Kim made a visit to the U.S. in early December to discuss the requirements for an additional 24,000 combat troops (1 division and 1 RCT).⁵ By early December, after a trip to Vietnam, McNamara was recommending an even larger reinforcement for 1966 and 1967. The Pentagon Papers noted his memo to the President on 7 December.

In order to "provide what it takes in men and materiel...to stick with our stated objectives and with the war," Secretary McNamara recommended the deployment of one Korean division plus another brigade, an additional Australian battalion, and 40 U.S. combat battalions, bringing the total U.S. maneuver battalions to 74, and the total U.S. personnel in Vietnam to approximately 400,000 by the end of 1966 with the possible need for an additional 200,000 in 1967.⁶

Even with these enormous reinforcements, McNamara noted that it "will not guarantee success." Although the JCS was calling for an

even larger force than McNamara, the tragic limitation now was the capacity of the U.S. Army and the training system to produce enough soldiers to fill the ranks of the forces clamored for by the generals.

By April of 1966, McNamara approved a force level of 70 U.S. and 23 Allied (of which 21 were ROK) battalions by the end of 1966 and a further 9 U.S. battalions in 1967. By June of 1966, the JCS raised the figures again, this time calling for an additional 11 U.S. battalions for 1967 to a total of 20 for that year and a total U.S. force of 90 battalions by the end of 1967. All the battalions were also to be increased by 1/3 so that the final manpower figure reached nearly 550,000. In addition, 7 additional Allied battalions were to be sought with 6 coming from the ROK to raise the total ROK force to three full divisions or around 60,000.⁷ The war was rapidly getting out of control.

Second ROK division negotiations

Given the rapidly rising requirements for troops in Vietnam, efforts to obtain "More Flags" were stepped up toward the end of December. The diplomatic effort was headed by Averell Harriman, Ambassador at Large, who wrote to the President of his coordination meetings with McNamara and Rusk on 10 December and the decision to send the Vice President to the Philippines and Korea while he coordinated other efforts around the world.⁸ In conjunction with the "More Flags" offensive, a "Peace Offensive"

was launched to explain to key nations around the world that the U.S. policy in Vietnam was to seek peace. As part of the "offensive," Johnson authorized a Christmas bombing halt on 24 December to pursue negotiations with North Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's unwaivering position resulted in a reluctant Johnson authorizing a resumption of the bombing on 31 January.⁹

Humphrey's stop in Seoul on 1-2 January did not result in a firm commitment of another division, but he did receive strong endorsements from Park on U.S. policy as he had a day earlier from Sato in Tokyo. Although the specific country by country report by Humphrey still remains classified, his cover letter is open. The most significant item concerning Korea and Park refers to Park's desire "to call a conference of free Asian leaders sometime this year to discuss political developments in the area as well as economic and social plans."¹⁰ Park was ready to cash in on his involvement in Vietnam in regional affairs with a bold move. Park's dream was realized when the first meeting of the Asia and Pacific Council (ASPAC) was held in Seoul in June, this was followed by his prominent attendance at the October 1966 meeting in Manila of Vietnam War allies followed by Johnson's state visit to Korea in November. One may say that by the end of 1966 Park had come of age in relationships with the U.S. and Japan as well as in the Asia-Pacific region.

Washington's perception of what Park wanted in return for the second division was revealed by a Thomson/Ropa memo of 5

January which noted that "it is clear that we will be expected to pay a geometrically increasing cost for their increased participation in the war. Korean politics remain fragile and uneasy, and we must avoid providing the still unpopular Park Government with blank checks." Lest one conclude that the additional cost was purely economic, they added later that "the next few months should see a tough Korean negotiatory posture on more troops for Vietnam -- one of whose purposes will be to counter-balance the new Japan Treaty by further complex entanglement with the U.S."¹¹ The "complex entanglement" alluded here can only mean security and economic ties.

On 8 January, Ambassador Brown received instructions from Washington that he needed to negotiate for a regiment for deployment to Vietnam by April and a division by July.¹² Time was short. A week later, Brown was assisted in his efforts by a visit from Rusk and Harriman. Finally, on the 25th, simultaneous meetings were held in Seoul between Defense Minister Kim and Ambassador Brown and in Washington between Assistant Secretary of State William Bundy and ROK Ambassador Kim.¹³ Three days later Park approved the deployments subject to National Assembly ratification which would clearly depend on the size of the U.S. concessions.¹⁴

The possibility of any mass resignation by the opposition had been considerably lessened when the moderate majority faction returned to the Assembly in mid October and had, in principle,

reversed their positions on the treaty and the troop bill.¹⁵ An exuberant Brown cabled Washington "I recommend a prompt high level message to President Pak of appreciation for decision [on the second division]...from President Johnson if possible. [3 lines sanitized] Message should express understanding of President Pak's desire to keep this decision secret until his return to Seoul from Southeast Asia trip."¹⁶

Park was planning a triumphant tour of Southeast Asia (7-18 February) with Vietnam as the culmination of the trip. Certainly an announcement after the tour would make the second division more palatable to the Koreans since Park could claim that the requirement originated as a result of his personal inspection of the battlefields. Johnson sent his message immediately.¹⁷ To make things easier for Park, Johnson approved a commitment for \$15 million in program loan for FY 1967 on 4 February. In a memo titled "Sweetner for another ROK Division in Vietnam." Bundy stated.

The attached memorandum from Bill Gaud [NSC staff] asks your final approval of a commitment to make a \$15-million program loan to Korea during FY 1967, as part of the deal to get another Korean division and brigade into Vietnam. The loan commitment is \$5 million higher than we would probably make in normal course, but is much cheaper than any of the items on the long list the Koreans requested. Moreover, Park must show that he got something from us if he is to sell his electorate on the idea of a second division.¹⁸

Economics was undoubtedly a large factor in the negotiations and decisions leading to the deployment of the second division. This was true for both Korea and the U.S.. After a second Far

East trip within a month by Humphrey in February. Jack Valenti, an NSC member who accompanied him wrote a trip report for the President. He stated that "The Koreans tell me they need more modern weapons...They will soon have 45,000 men in the field in Vietnam. The total cost to us for equipping and paying for these men is peanuts compared to what it would be for a comparable number of Americans."¹⁹ According to the official National Assembly history, it was the second Humphrey trip and his meeting with Park on 23 February which ironed out remaining differences and finalized the agreement for the second division.²⁰

The bill for the second division was submitted to the Defense Committee of the National Assembly on 2 March where it was debated until 18 March and then approved for submission to the main body. The bill was rushed through the plenum in one day of short but fierce debate. Unlike August 1965, the opposition was in full attendance. But the final outcome was predictable and the bill was ratified with a vote of 95 to 27 with 3 abstentions on the 18 March.²¹ The President sent his obligatory message of appreciation to Park.²² In keeping with the deployment schedule requested by MACV, a regiment (the 3rd regiment of the Capital Division already in Vietnam) was deployed in mid April and the second division (9th White Horse Division) was deployed in September.²³

The "Brown Memorandum"

One of the main sources of criticisms directed against the Korean involvement in Vietnam, characterising it as a mercenary effort, was the letter sent by Ambassador Brown on 4 March to Defense Minister Kim.²⁴ This letter confirmed and outlined in detail the commitments made by the U.S. to secure the second division. Perhaps the most "damaging" part of the letter had to do with commitments made under the heading of "Economic Assistance" which committed the U.S. to substantial concessions which would be of enormous value to Korea. Ambassador Porter stated in 1970 that the total Korean earnings from Vietnam between 1965 and 1969 was \$546 million.²⁵ In addition, the suspension of the MAP transfer project resulted in a saving of \$93.1 million to the ROK budget between 1966 and 1970. The value of other services and materiel provided by the U.S. as a result of the Brown memo and earlier agreements resulted in another \$300 million between 1966 and 1970.²⁶ The total direct benefit of the war between 1965 and 1970 is approximately \$930 million. One estimate, based on Korean sources, estimated that the \$180 million earned in 1968 represented 16 percent of the total foreign exchange earned and represented 2.8 percent of the GNP.²⁷

No one doubts that Korea benefitted at the national level from the war. But is this cause enough to label the military contribution a "mercenary" effort? The argument made thus far has been that the primary motivation for the dispatch of the first

division was to guarantee the security of Korea. The motive factor was influenced by expected decline in total U.S. aid, and in particular, military aid. The focus of the U.S. aid policy toward Korea since the Kennedy administration and until the middle of 1965 was on economic development.

The option to reduce the ROK armed forces was never unequivocally renounced. In addition, there had been repeated rumours of a possible U.S. pullout, albeit partial, from Korea. The possibility of this increased as the Vietnam War escalated. Finally, and the issue which worried most of the Koreans, was the apparent U.S. policy to place Japan in a position to replace the U.S. as the power center in Northeast Asia, to form an anti-communist bloc funded by Japan and manned by Korea. This was the underlying rationale for the American push on the normalization treaty.

Park and his regime stood on thin grounds with regard to popular legitimacy and one of the cornerstones of his policy was to reassure himself and the people that U.S. support for military and economic security would continue. Although he admired Japan as a model for economic development and favored the treaty to open the way for Korea to follow in its economic footsteps, he could not have seen Japan as a viable replacement for the U.S. on military security.

The opportunity presented by the Vietnam War when the U.S. escalated its commitment in the spring and summer of 1965 was a

god send. The commitments he extracted from the U.S. were all directly related to preserving and enhancing the military posture of Korea. This had the fortunate benefit of undermining opposition to the treaty as well, which he did not miss. The military assistance commitments outlined in the Brown memorandum are relatively minor since the major concessions had already been made for the dispatch of the first division.

With security concerns largely dissipated by the 1965 agreement, the 1966 requirement for a second division presented another opportunity for Park to pursue his goal of rapid economic development. This, of course, had been the main reason for pursuing the treaty. The result is that if one analyzed the Brown memo in the absence of the 1965 agreements, the conclusions are obviously skewed to the economic concessions made by the U.S.. The memo does not negate the original motive for sending combat troops in 1965, to guarantee the military security posture of Korea followed by its potentially preemptive effect on treaty opposition. Opportunism might be a better term to describe Park's motivations.

The Third division

Further, albeit circumstantial, evidence exists to show that economic gains, whatever they might have been, were secondary to security considerations. In March of 1967, Westmoreland sent a new requirements list for FY 1968. Based on observed infiltration

rate from North Vietnam, he estimated that an additional minimum of 100,000 and an optimum of 200,000 would be needed in 1968 above the 470,000 authorized for 1967.²⁸ This set off a series of deliberations in Washington not unlike the 44-battalion request of June 1965.

By May, the policy debate reached the ridiculous level as McNaughton calculated the "allocable" share each allied country with troops in Vietnam needed to contribute in order to match the level of U.S. increases. The share for Korea was 14,500 for every 100,000 U.S. soldiers. This meant that the new Westmoreland request would require between 14,500 and 29,000 additional Korean troops.²⁹ Restrained by the need to call up the reserves, a politically sensitive decision which Johnson had avoided up to now, for even the "minimum" option, the President announced his decision in early August to limit the U.S. force level to 525,000.³⁰ On 22 July 1967, Clark Clifford and General Taylor were dispatched for yet another "More Flags" mission. This sensitive mission was carried out with great care and delicacy, but the issue of troop contribution was directly addressed. One of their principal stops, of course, was Korea where Park told them, according to the trip report, of his concern over the "growing infiltration of agents from North Korea," but conceded that,

...Korea has a moral obligation to do more in Viet-Nam and states that his country will fulfill that obligation. However, he points to his political difficulties arising from the boycotting of the Assembly by the opposition party.

a crisis which is not likely to disappear for some time, possibly for months. Since there is a constitutional requirement for Assembly approval of any significant increase of combat troops in Viet-Nam, he feels that it will not be possible to provide anything like another division until he is out of this trouble. He implied, however, that in the interim he might be able to produce some support troops and possibly some Korean civilians under the terms of some of the proposals which are under consideration.³¹

Park followed this up with a personal letter to Johnson on 8 September, which has only recently been declassified (March 1991), to express his reservations due to "various restrictive factors" and the "special domestic situation." He continued by addressing the troop issue directly.

With regard to the question of additional dispatch of our forces to Vietnam, I have already instructed my Minister of National Defense to examine and report on the possibility as to what size of forces and how we would be able to contribute if we are to make such an additional dispatch of forces to Vietnam. My decision naturally will be based on such report. As prerequisite to this, however, I am faced with two important problems which I must solve. One problem is the apprehension widely entertained by the general public here that our capability for Korea's own defense might be jeopardized in case additional Korean forces are sent to Vietnam. The other is another apprehension that, in view of the marked increase of infiltration by communist armed agents from the north, we are not yet psychologically accommodated to feel secure unless some effective counter-measures are taken in this field if we are to send additional forces to Vietnam.³²

The security concerns of Park was apparently real and the tone of Park's responses to Clifford-Taylor and on the letter to Johnson was markedly different from his almost eager willingness to send troops in 1965 and 1966. One source of the anxiety must have been the huge increases the U.S. was planning for the Vietnam effort and the renewed possibility of a redeployment of the two U.S. divisions in Korea. Further, while two divisions and a Marine

brigade had been sent to Vietnam. only one new division had been raised in Korea to replace them.³³

Despite these real concerns. Park did make a conditional commitment in early December to send a "light division" to Vietnam.³⁴ Although the records are still largely classified for this period. Washington had indicated that additional commitments in addition to the earlier ones would be made. Toward the end of December. Johnson and Park had an opportunity for a face to face meeting in Canberra. where they were attending the funeral of the Australian Prime Minister who had died in a swimming accident.³⁵ According to the text of a letter declassified in March 1991. Johnson wrote to Park to confirm the new commitments.

During our luncheon in Canberra you told me of the problems that confront you in connection with the dispatch of additional Korean forces to Vietnam. I fully understand the need for you to be able to assure the Korean people that their country's security. political stability. and economic progress will not be adversely affected....I am determined to see that your strength at home is maintained....I am aware...of the importance of demonstrating to your people that your government can successfully meet and defeat the threat posed by North Korean infiltration...Towards meeting this goal. my government will provide as promptly as possible appropriate assistance. including furnishing two destroyers and helicopters for this purpose...I believe it is particularly important to develop further your legally constituted law enforcement agencies...freeing the ROK armed forces...Accordingly. I am prepared to provide a special program of assistance...to strengthen the Korean national police...[in order to] gain the support of the people and their National Assembly...for the additional troop dispatch [and to alleviate] their concern that the nation's economic progress should not be impaired...My government is prepared to assist you in the construction of...a major modern highway between...Seoul and...Pusan [which you consider to be an important element of economic progress]...[with] construction equipment...technical experts...and to help finance...the use of the PL 480 program [to generate the won

cost)...further...I agree in principle to assist in the establishment of a civilian Korean logistics service corps for the support of the ROK armed forces in Vietnam. My government stands ready to help you meet the costs of this corps...³⁶

Park's response was positive, however he wanted to use a ploy to mislead the Assembly and the people from thinking that the new troop bill was being presented as a result of U.S. pressure. This would be done by sending the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister to Washington for "consultations" with Johnson in the middle of January on the Vietnam situation and return to Korea before Park submitted the bill. As Ambassador Porter put it "There is no doubt that President Park sees this as a device to move the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense to the forefront in coming Assembly consideration, and to permit Park himself to adopt a position of having been convinced of the need for more troops by the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Defense as a result of their Washington consultation." Walt Rostow, Bundy's replacement as the National Security Advisor (since early 1966) endorsed the ploy in a Top Secret memo, while State objected. Johnson's answer was "If President Park wishes, I will see them."³⁷

However, the third ROK division would not be forthcoming. In January 1968, tensions with North Korea rose sharply. After a heightened series of incidents along the DMZ throughout 1967, the North Koreans made a daring assassination attempt on Park on 21 January.³⁸ Two days later, USS Pueblo was seized by the North Koreans. The long feared attempt by North Korea to open a "second

front" seemed to be coming true. The situation was further aggravated by what was perceived to have been an exceptionally weak U.S. response along with a renewal of the argument that the Vietnam deployments were the main causative factors of North Korean belligerency. Park balked at sending the division and instead considered withdrawing the entire Korean contingent in Vietnam.³⁹ Park made it known to Johnson that another provocation by the North Koreans would result in a retaliatory action. It was an option favored by most of the Korean public.

Alarmed, Johnson sent a message of reassurance on 3 February followed quickly with another letter on 5 February outlining plans to immediately increase U.S. military assistance. An appreciative Park wrote back stating that he could not remain passive if the North Koreans acted again. Cyrus Vance was hurriedly sent as the President's personal representative to obtain Park's concurrence that he would not take any action which could precipitate another Korean war. After arduous negotiations, a joint communique was issued on 15 February which stated that "the two countries would consult immediately whenever the security of the ROK was threatened, and that annual meetings of defense ministers would be held to discuss defense and security matters of mutual concern."⁴⁰ Concurrently, Johnson asked the Congress to approve a special additional MAP supplement of \$100 million. Most of this additional military aid was spent to train and equip the first F-4 squadron in the ROK air force.⁴¹

Given the circumstances surrounding the third division issue, can it be said that economics was the primary motivation for the Vietnam deployments? One can only infer with available evidence, but it points strongly to the dominance which security held in the mind of Park and most Koreans. This is further corroborated by the arguments put forth by opposition Assemblymen during the debate in March 1966 for the second division. The overwhelming majority of the arguments against the deployment addressed the military and political objectives of the war, international political and military repercussions and the impact on Korean security.⁴²

¹ For an excellent review of the battle and the erroneous lessons learned, see *U.S. News & World Report*, 29 Oct 90, pp 32-51. From the article (p.32): "Ia Drang...was a milestone," wrote William P. Bundy, then assistant secretary of state for East Asia..."It appeared to confirm the importance of...search-and-destroy...and that American forces were especially effective in this role - a contrast that became more vivid when on November 28 a large South Vietnamese unit was ambushed and cut to pieces in the Michelin plantation northwest of Saigon." General Giap knew better. "After the Ia Drang battle we concluded that we could fight and win against the cavalry troops..." "We had a strategy of people's war. You had tactics, and it takes very decisive tactics to win a strategic victory. You planned to use the cavalry tactics as your strategy to win the war. If we could defeat your tactics - your helicopters - then we could defeat your strategy."

² PP 4:297.

³ PP 4:307.

⁴ Memo. McNaughton to McGB, 4 Dec 65. NSF. Files of McGB. Box 17: McGB's cover memo of transmittal to LBJ. Subj: Allied combat forces for Vietnam, 4 Dec 65. NSF. Memos to Pres. Box 5, both at LBJ Library.

⁵ Memo. JCT.Ropa & Cooper to McGB. Subj: Two Weeks in Asia. 7 Dec 65. Reference File "This Week in Asia." LBJ Library.

⁶ PP 4:309.

⁷ PP 4:309-325.

⁸ Memo. Harriman to LBJ, 23 Dec 65. NSF. Memos to Pres. Box 5. LBJ Library.

⁹ PP 4:3.

¹⁰ Letter. Humphrey to LBJ, 5 Jan 66. NSF. NSC Mtgs. Box 2. LBJ Library.

¹¹ Memo. Thomson & Ropa to McGB. Subj: The New Year in Asia. 7 Jan 66. Reference File "This Week in Asia." LBJ Library.

¹² Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*, p. 17.

¹³ *NA History*, pp. 1035-1036.

¹⁴ Symington Hearings, p. 1533.

- 15 Memo. JCT to McGB. Subj: The Week in Asia other than Vietnam. 14 Oct 65. Thomson Papers. Box 13. JFK Library.
- 16 Seoul Embtel 806. 1 Feb 66. NSF. Memos to Pres. Box 6. LBJ Library.
- 17 Memo. JCT to McGB. Subj: Presidential message to President Park on Korean troops for Vietnam. 1 Feb 66. NSF. Memos to Pres. Box 6. LBJ Library.
- 18 Memo. McGB to LBJ. 3 Feb 66. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.
- 19 Memo. Valenti to LBJ. 25 Feb 66. WHCF. CO 151. Box 49. LBJ Library.
- 20 *NA History*. p. 1063.
- 21 *NA History*. pp. 1077-1095. *MND History*. p. 56. Curiously, while the NA history devoted more pages on the debate and passage of this bill, the MND History only devoted only one half page to the events of February and March 1966.
- 22 Memo. Komer to LBJ. Subj: Letter of appreciation to President Park for additional troops to Vietnam. 24 Mar 66. Thomson Papers. Box 12. JFK Library.
- 23 Larsen and Collins. *Allied Participation*. p. 131. *MNL History*. p. 57.
- 24 Text of Letter from Symington Hearings. pp. 1549-1550.
- 25 Symington Hearings. p. 1708. The total includes the following categories: military commodity procurement, war risk insurance premiums, contracts for services, construction contracts, remittances of military and civilian personnel, and commercial exports.
- 26 *Ibid.* pp. 1571. 1759-1761.
- 27 Se Jin Kim. *Asian Survey*. p. 519.
- 28 PP 4:427-431.
- 29 PP 4:469-470.
- 30 PP 4:527.
- 31 Clifford-Taylor Report to the President. 5 Aug 67. NSF. Country. Box 91. LBJ Library.

- 32 Seoul Embtel 1238. 9 Sep 67. NSF. Country. Box 91. LBJ Library.
- 33 Symington Hearings. p. 1557.
- 34 Memo. Rostow to LBJ. 7 Dec 67. NSF. Country. Box 91. LBJ Library.
- 35 Johnson. *Vantage*. p. 378.
- 36 Deptel 3104 (Seoul). 23 Dec 67. NSF. Country. Box 91. LBJ Library.
- 37 Porter's quote from Memo. Rostow to LBJ. Subj: More Korean Troops for Vietnam. 5 Jan 68. NSF. Country. Box 91. LBJ Library.
- 38 See for example. "Seoul Says Reds Seek to Mar Vote." *The New York Times*. 14 Apr 67. p. 5 and "Tension Builds Among G.I.s at Korean Buffer Line." *The New York Times*. 29 Jan 68. p. 1.
- 39 Lyman. *Orbis*. Summer 1968. pp. 570-571.
- 40 AHSD 7:F6.
- 41 Symington Hearings. pp. 1761-1762.
- 42 *NA History*. pp. 1078-1095.

CHAPTER 9

AFTERMATH

1966 - Park's Banner Year

The year 1966 would prove to be the pay-off year for Park. Park had a new found confidence in his grip over Korea and a regional position with considerable leverage and influence as a result of the Vietnam deployments and the normalization treaty. Thomson wrote in June 1966 that "Political instability, economic doldrums, and isolation from its neighbors have given way to robust and relatively stable democracy, economic take-off, and full participation both in Viet-Nam war and Asian regional arrangements....Korea [was] no longer a fragile and isolated U.S. ward, but reconciled with its traditional enemy and potential protector [Japan], participant in [a] new Asian regional initiative, and number one Asian contributor to [the] Viet-Nam effort."¹ Echoing nearly identical sentiments two months later was Ambassador Porter who observed that Korea had "traditionally been a country which looked backward rather than forward, looked inward rather than outward, evaded or deflected relationships with other countries rather than initiated or influenced them...[but now] to a new self-confidence has been added a new outlook and a new attitude toward the outside world in which Korea now conceives of herself as playing an important

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part."² For the first time, perhaps since the opening of Korea in the 19th century, there was a sense of respect towards Korea. It would not be an understatement to describe 1966 as a watershed year and the triumph of Park's foreign policy.

Domestically, the economy began to grow dramatically. GNP growth rate increased from 2.2 percent in 1962 to 12.7 percent in 1966.³ The Korean economic miracle had started. While the war earnings were a significant factor, the new relationship with Japan would prove to have a far more lasting impact. As a result of the grants, loans and credits totalling \$800 million coming from the normalization treaty, by May of 1966, over \$200 million had been committed for economic development projects with Japanese corporations. To place this figure into perspective, one only has to realize that the 1966 Korean budget was barely \$540 million.⁴ By the end of 1966, Japan had become Korea's top trading partner.⁵ The trend continued for both sides so that by 1989, the Japan-Korea trade showed the highest figure for the Asia-Pacific region.⁶ In 1967, Korea became a member of GATT.⁷

Of greater importance than economic benefits were the enhancements to Korean security. The modernization of the military began almost immediately after the deployment of the first division. In October 1965, the newspapers reported with satisfaction the soon to be introduced modern F-5 fighters to replace the aging F-86 and the announcement by the Defense

Minister of the decision to establish three 8 inch howitzer battalions capable of delivering nuclear munitions to "offset the reduction in the military force at home due to the dispatch of one combat division to Vietnam."⁸ Other military hardware were being modernized as quickly as they could be supplied by the U.S.. Just as important was the level of military aid which increased from \$200 million in 1961 to \$247 million in 1966 and would hit a peak of \$354 million in 1968.⁹

Non-military aid (development loans/grants, supporting assistance) also reversed its downward trend from \$120 million in 1962 to \$105 million in 1964 to \$144 million in 1966.¹⁰ Not to be underestimated in the overall calculation for defense preparedness was the war fighting experience that was being gained by the Korean troops in Vietnam. Annual rotation would insure that by the end of the Korean involvement, over 300,000 Korean soldiers would have seen service in Vietnam.¹¹ Park also had a firm pledge from Johnson that any consideration for reduction of U.S. forces in Korea would only be done after he was thoroughly consulted.

To add emphasis to the commitments made by the U.S., the long drawn out negotiations over a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), begun in February 1962, was signed in July, ratified by the Assembly in October and came into effect in February 1967.¹² The State Department administrative history observed that "The question of even-handed treatment was particularly

important in early 1965, when we were asking the Koreans (as first-class allies) to participate to a greater extent in the struggle in Viet-Nam...our actions relating to the SOFA were designed to assist the ROK to evolve from a client state into a self-reliant and self-confident ally as well as to settle a problem of major importance between us."¹³

The political achievements in 1966 were no less impressive. Park began the year with a carefully planned tour of key Southeast Asian nations (Malaysia, Thailand, and Taiwan). The main topic of his conversations with the leaders was the need to form a stronger alliance among free Asian nations through closer economic, social and cultural ties to form a cohesive anti-communist bloc. Park also called for unified action to assist Vietnam, calling it a "collective responsibility" of the free Asian nations.¹⁴

The culmination of one of his dreams came to fruition on 14 June when the organizing meeting of the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC) was held in Seoul. Although tinged with over-militant anti-communism, ASPAC was able to provide one of the strongest statements of Asian support for U.S. policy in Vietnam.¹⁵ A jubilant Thomson wrote a few days later. "A plethora of regional and sub-regional cooperative initiatives has evolved: ASPAC, ADB [to be organized in November], ASA, etc., which hold great promise for future Asian resolution of the region's own problems. Most important, our own view that

our presence in Viet-Nam was buying time for the rest of Asia is now shared by the Asian themselves -- for example, Lee Quan Yew's celebrated speech." (emphasis in the original)¹⁶

Beginning on 24 October and lasting two days, the Chiefs of State of all the countries involved directly with troops in Vietnam met in Manila "for a review of the war and of nonmilitary programs of development [in Vietnam], and for a broader purpose -- to consider the future of Asia."¹⁷ Park was on another swing through Southeast Asia, this time stopping in Vietnam and Hong Kong before arriving in Manila.¹⁸ Johnson himself had embarked on his first extensive foreign tour, significantly through the Asian-Pacific region a week earlier. The Manila Conference was more symbolic than substantive, but it was an important mark of Park's new status. Johnson, in his memoir, credited Park with the initiation of the conference idea.¹⁹

A week after the conference, Johnson made a state visit to Korea to personally demonstrate his commitment to Korea and to provide soothing words of reassurance that the U.S. was making all possible efforts to harden Korean defenses by modernizing its armed forces.²⁰ Most significantly, Johnson assured the Koreans that "the United States has no plan to reduce the present level of United States forces in Korea."²¹ November also witnessed the birth of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in

Tokyo and while the bank would not make its first loan until 1968, what counted was that Korea was a charter member.²²

Korea after 1966

While the Vietnam War continued to take its bloody toll, Korea continued with its progress in politically and economically. The Korean economic miracle of the 1970s and 1980s had been well documented in Alice Amsden's *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*. However, relations with the U.S. began to fray due to the fallacy of U.S. policy in Vietnam most dramatically demonstrated by the Tet Offensive in 1968. That it soon followed the North Korean assassination attempt and the Pueblo incident seemed to give further indication that U.S. power was on the wane. President Nixon's Guam Doctrine in July 1969 also seemed to validate the long held fear of U.S. withdrawal from security commitments in Asia. Nixon's new policy was soon followed by a pull out of one U.S. division (20,000) from Korea in 1970. The demise of the Bretton Woods system due to the American suspension of the gold standard in 1971 followed by U.S.-PRC detente in 1972 as well as the on-going peace talks on Vietnam were seen as clear indications of US's hegemonic decline and weakening of its anti-communist resolve. Great doubts were cast on the U.S. resolve to uphold and defend its Asian allies.²³ The Vietnam withdrawal in 1973 was followed by the seemingly inept Carter

administration and the "scare" of a complete U.S. pullout from Korea.

Given the U.S. pullback from peripheral regions in the 1970s, Korea's priority was to establish a firm economic base to guarantee its own security and prosperity. The rapid economic growth from the late 60s to the mid-80s assured that Korea had the wealth to build a modernized military. The success of the policies pursued by Park in search of security, prosperity and influence can now be observed as Korea is poised to take advantage of the new calculus of international and regional relations which emerged and is emerging in the late 80s and early 90s.

Japan After 1965

Japan's phenomenal rise to world economic superpower status has been told and retold in countless number of books. Today, Japan is second only to the United States in the size of its GNP. Japan's export oriented industrial structure and the trade with the United States have been the foundation for this growth. Premier Sato (1964-1972) skillfully negotiated through the turbulent Vietnam years with a policy of appeasement toward the American Vietnam policy. This policy insured the fulfillment of his two priority goals: economic growth, and restoration of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty. Japan's primacy in Asia as an economic power was demonstrated in November 1966

when it contributed \$200 million to the initial start up capital for the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Historian Thomas Havens recapitulated Japanese foreign and economic policies in 1966 and Japan's role in the ADB this way,

Probably the most meaningful regional organization Japan joined in the mid-sixties was the Asian Development Bank (ADB), founded in ceremonies at Tokyo in November 1966. The Japanese contributed the first president...and \$200 million of the bank's initial \$1 billion capital...Japan was able to help the agency stick to its original purpose, loans for economic development, and the ADB ended up as one link in the chain of international financial institutions that helped East and Southeast Asia gain an edge in many product areas in the seventies. By holding firmly to its measured support for the United States in Vietnam, Japan managed to grow more deeply enmeshed in the rest of Southeast Asia without damaging its small but profitable trade with communist countries. In this sense, the government's political position on the war struck the right chord to mollify nearly all parties abroad...²⁴

Economic policy coordination with the United States had been aided by a Kennedy era innovation arising from Prime Minister Ikeda's talks with Kennedy in June 1961. This was the cabinet level Economic Conference, the first of which was held in November 1961 followed by subsequent meetings in December 1962, January 1964 (delayed by the Kennedy assassination), July 1965 and July 1966.²⁵ In June 1966, a new forum was instituted to allow closer policy coordination in foreign policy with the first meeting of the Policy Planning Conference.²⁶ At this time, Thomson spoke of "Japan's emergence as a full-fledge U.S. partner and a leader in Asian development and conciliation."²⁷

Although Japan was a member of ASPAC, it welcomed the formation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in August 1967. ASEAN's greater emphasis on economic development and lack of a military agenda, unlike ASPAC, was more comfortable for Japan. Japan began working closely with the ASEAN nations on aid and development, a relationship which continues to this day.²⁸ Earlier, Sato had visited Korea in June, the first Japanese Premier to do so since the end of World War II, to demonstrate the new state of Japan-Korea relations and to meet Vice President Humphrey to discuss his upcoming trip to Washington in November.²⁹

The principle agenda for Sato's 1967 trip to Washington was Okinawa. With Japanese economy well on its way toward meteoric growth, Sato pursued his second priority on which he had "staked his political future."³⁰ Sato made a calculated move to identify even closer with the U.S. Vietnam policy in late 1967 as he had in May 1965 in order to gain U.S. concessions on trade and the Okinawa issue. He made a controversial visit to Vietnam in September despite public opposition to the war. He hoped to secure at least the return of the Ogasawaras (Bonin Islands) in the Ryukyus chain and a definite date of return for Okinawa during his Washington visit knowing that these positive steps toward the eventual return of Okinawa would preempt any public displeasure toward his identification with the U.S. Vietnam policy. President Johnson

also knew that the Okinawa issue would be pressed hard by Sato. An NSC meeting was held in August to determine the U.S. position. While the text of the meeting remain partially classified, the agenda has been opened.

(1) The Japanese desire to begin moving toward settlement toward the Ryukyus and Bonin Islands issue;

(2) our desire for Japanese cooperation in cutting our balance of payment problem, especially the problem of military accounts;

(3) the need for Japan to do more in economic aid to Asia.³¹

The final agreement was less than what Sato had hoped, but positive nonetheless. The three main points of the agreement were: 1) on the Ryukyus, "the United States military bases on those islands continue to play a vital role in assuring the security of Japan and other free nations in the Far East."; 2) "an agreement should be reached between the two governments within a few years on a date satisfactory to them for reversion of these islands"; and 3) immediate measures would be taken to restore the Ogasawaras to Japan.³²

The Ogasawaras were restored to Japanese control on 26 June 1968 and eventually, Okinawa was also restored in May 1972, just two months before Tanaka became the new Prime Minister. Thus, in the end, Sato accomplished the two priorities he had established for his period of Prime Ministership.

Nixon's Guam Doctrine of 1969 caused some worry in the Sato cabinet with the implied possibilities of U.S. withdrawal from Korea and perhaps Japan. But, they were soon reassured that although a Korean pullout might be in the offing, no changes were planned for the U.S. presence in Japan. The more discriminating role implied by the Guam Doctrine mollified the antiwar critics in Japan thus helping Sato.³³

The amicable Japan-U.S. relations became strained in 1971 when President Nixon, within a month of each other, caused two "shocks" on Japan. The first was the announcement on 15 July that Nixon would shortly visit China without warning Sato in advance. The problem caused by this announcement for Sato was two fold. First, the basic premise of the Vietnam War supported by Sato, as a move to contain Chinese communism, seemed to be undermined. Second, in keeping with supporting the U.S. position with regard to Taiwan, Sato had refused to recognize China. A month later, Nixon announced his suspension of the dollar gold standard which floated the exchange rate and forced an upward reevaluation of the Yen (eventually stabilising after a rise of 16.88 percent). This obviously would have a direct impact on Japanese export to the United States. Later in October, the U.S. forced a settlement with Japan on the synthetic textiles issue by imposing an import restraint. The Japanese took these issues as "national affronts to Japan

rather than as an overdue rearrangement of economic and diplomatic relations in the Asian and Pacific region."³⁴

Caught in a dilemma, Sato decided to resign rather than have the drastic decline in his popularity impact on the LDP's future. Even the restoration of Okinawa failed to bring about a turnaround. The new Prime Minister, Tanaka Kakuei, took immediate steps to recognize China and assumed a more softened attitude toward North Korea and the Soviet Union. When the Paris agreements marked the end of U.S. presence in Vietnam, Japan was more relieved than jubilant.³⁵ It had been a roller coaster decade in foreign and domestic affairs, but Japan emerged as an economic superpower, had Okinawa and the Ryukyus back, and was ready to continue pursuing further economic growth.

The United States

U.S. relations with Japan and Korea after 1965 was largely tempered by the Vietnam War. Japan and Korea benefitted from the weakened U.S. position and took advantage of the leverage provided by U.S. Vietnam policy to pursue national goals, but it cannot be said that U.S. "lost out" in its relationships with Japan and Korea. The priorities established for Korea since 1961 and Japan since the end of World War II were achieved. Korea became a model of success for late industrialization. Japan and Korea maintained a thriving

relationship which indeed became a solid bloc against further Communist gains in the region. Japan established itself to implement its new found wealth to aid the rest of Asia. Although political-military ties with the two countries took a beating, the core was still sound and unequivocally endorsed on both sides of the Pacific.

The real loser was the American people and the American domestic agenda. Starting from the compromise of Johnson's Great Society and the bankruptcy of the nation in men, finance and even more critically, the national moral fiber and spirit, the Vietnam War has affected the U.S. until today. Even the victory over Iraq can not fully erase the lasting impact of the costly political and economic legacies of Vietnam.

- 1 Memo. JCT to Rostow, Subj: Elements of Progress in Asia, 24 Jun 66, Thomson Papers, Box 13, JFK Library.
- 2 Quoted in AHSD 7:2g.
- 3 Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant*, p. 56.
- 4 A figure of 143.3 billion Won for 1966 from Symington Hearing, p. 1759. Exchange rate of 265.4 Won to \$1.00 in 1965 from Amsden, *Asia's Next Giant*, p. 67.
- 5 Roberts, "The Spoils of Peace," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 23 June 66, p. 596-598.
- 6 Smith and do Rosario, "Empire of the Sun," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 May 90, pp. 46-48. The level for South Korea was \$93.85 billion for the 86-89 period while the second largest Asian trading partner for Japan, Taiwan, posted \$78.51 billion.
- 7 AHSD 7:2g.
- 8 *Press Translations: Korea*, Vol. 6, No. 250 (22 Oct 65), Item 12 (*Kyonghyang Sinmun*, 21 Oct 65) and 13 (*Chosun Ilbo*, 22 Oct 65).
- 9 The 1961 figure from Chung, Un-chan, *The Development of the Korean Economy and the Role of the United States*, p. 179. Others from Symington Hearings, p. 1759.
- 10 AID: 344.
- 11 Stentzel, "Seoul's Second Bonanza," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 Jul 73, p. 43.
- 12 *NA History*, p. 1130
- 13 AHSD 7:F4.
- 14 *NA History*, p. 1036.
- 15 Havens, *Fire*, pp. 113-114. AHSD 7:2g. *NA History*, pp. 1129-1130.
- 16 Memo. JCT to Rostow, Subj: Elements of Progress in Asia, 24 Jun 66, Thomson Papers, Box 13, JFK Library.
- 17 Johnson, *Vantage*, p.248.

- 18 *NA History*, p. 1194.
- 19 Johnson. *Vantage*, p. 359.
- 20 *NA History*, pp. 1194-1195.
- 21 Seoul Embtel 2402, 2 Nov 66. NSF. Country, Box 255, LBJ Library.
- 22 Havens, *Fire*, p. 114. AHSD 7:2g.
- 23 Eckert et al, *Korea Old and New*, p. 364. Olsen, *U.S. Policy and the Two Koreas*, p. 9.
- 24 Havens, *Fire*, pp. 114-115.
- 25 Full name was United States-Japan Committee on Trade and Economic Affairs. See Reichauer, *Life*, pp. 202-203, 213-214, 244-245, 258-260 and 300.
- 26 *Ibid.* p. 299.
- 27 Memo, Thomson to Rostow, Subj: Elements of Progress in Asia, 24 Jun 66, Thomson Papers, Box 13, JFK Library.
- 28 Havens, *Fire*, p. 114.
- 29 *Ibid.* pp. 125-126.
- 30 *iIbid.* p.132.
- 31 Memo, Subj: NSC Meeting August 30, 1967, 31 Aug 67. NSF, NSC Mtgs, Box 2, LBJ Library.
- 32 Havens, *Fire*, pp. 138-139.
- 33 *Ibid.* pp. 183-184.
- 34 *Ibid.* pp. 222-224.
- 35 *Ibid.* pp. 228-231.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

American policy constrained

I wonder...how much thought is being given to the price we are paying for our current actions in Vietnam *in the Far East*...In my view, the price we are paying within the region...will continue to rise unless we find some way to move with speed to a political track in Indochina.¹

James C. Thomson, Jr., June 1965

If one theme can be isolated from the plethora presented by this thesis, it is how American foreign policy toward Japan and the Republic of Korea was constrained by the escalatory policies adopted for Vietnam starting in 1965. Stated simply, because of the level of U.S. commitment in Vietnam and the concomitant need for Korean troops and for Japanese support in words and logistics, U.S. policy toward Japan and Korea became skewed from 1965 onward.

The consequences for Japan were U.S. concessions on trade and other economic disputes and a more forthcoming U.S. policy on the restoration of the Ryukyu Islands (Okinawa prefecture) to Japanese sovereignty. U.S. policy toward Japan did not change radically since the economic disputes and the Ryukyu Islands issues probably would have been settled even if the U.S. had not intervened in Vietnam. What Vietnam did was to

¹ Memo, JCT to McGB, 11 Jun 65, Subj: The Far East Costs of Our Vietnam Policy. Thomson Papers, Box 13, JFK Library.

limit the bargaining position and the policy options for the U.S., because of the importance of Japanese support.

Korea's most important benefit was a greater U.S. commitment in money and materiel to bolster Korean military security. In contrast to U.S. policy toward Japan, the result in Korea was in direct contrast to the intended American policy. President Kennedy's sweeping policy review in 1961 had resulted in a new emphasis on Korean economic development along with a significant reduction in military aid. The Vietnam War and the requirement generated by the Pentagon and MACV for Korean troops in 1965 resulted in a policy reversal.

The Japan-Korea Treaty

Until 1965, American policy for Northeast Asia had been a no-nonsense approach to creating a regional anti-communist bloc centered on Japan. The central pillar of the bloc was to be the normalization of relationship between Japan and South Korea. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations relentlessly pursued the realization of a Japan-Korea treaty as the priority foreign policy goal for the region. That it took as long as it did was more the result of Japanese and Korean domestic situations than any lack of U.S. efforts.

The normalization issue held a completely different significance for Japan and Korea. Normalization with Korea was not a priority issue for Japan and only became important when

the United States placed great importance on it. It's significance for Japan was in appeasing the U.S. in order to mitigate developing contentious issues concerning the bilateral economic relationship and the return of the Ryukyus. In addition to the implicit economic and territorial leverages held by the U.S. over Japan, constant direct pressure was also applied to insure that Japan realized how important the normalization was for the United States.

The U.S. escalation in Vietnam did not have a direct impact on persuading Japan to normalize with Korea. Domestically though, the two issues coalesced when Japanese mass opposition to the Vietnam War in 1965 merged with the anti-treaty movement. By this time, however, Premier Sato was firmly committed to supporting the war as well as pushing through the conclusion of the treaty.

While the normalization treaty was not a priority for Japan, it was the main policy goal for Park. But Park's priority was not supported by the Korean people. The problem for the U.S. was not so much to pressure Park as it was to convince the Korean people that the normalization treaty would not mean abandonment of Korea to Japan. American military assistance and presence was the most visible sign of continued U.S. commitment to Korea. Park realized that insuring an undiminished level of U.S. military support for Korean security was an uncompromisable prerequisite for not only establishing a

secure national foundation to attract foreign capital and technology, but for gaining popular political support.

Park's rise to power with the coup in May 1961 coincided with a sweeping policy review undertaken by President Kennedy. Unfortunately for Park, the review and the subsequent policy reorientation was partly the result of significant reductions in the U.S. foreign aid program. Although Korea had been the recipient of one of the largest share of the aid package, Kennedy's new policy required a large reduction in the military aid to place greater emphasis on economic development. The idea of emphasizing economic development was not, in itself, opposed by Park. The problem was that the absolute size of economic aid would also be reduced. Of even greater concern not only to Park, but to the Korean people in general, was the idea of reducing military aid. This meant reducing the size of the Korean armed forces, perhaps by up to 100,000. Such an action, which would have a direct impact on Korean security, was unacceptable to Park. The implementation of Kennedy's policy could jeopardize even further what tenuous trust and legitimacy he had from the Korean people. Thus, when Park realized the intent of the new American policy, he placed its reversal as a priority over economic development.

The opportunity to reverse the U.S. policy for Korea came with Vietnam. When American military plans for Vietnam in 1965 incorporated a significant number of Korean troops, Park

immediately seized the opportunity to force a change on American Korea policy. The downward trend in U.S. military support was reversed with the deployment of the first division in 1965. The second division in 1966 won economic concessions from the United States.

The opportunity presented to Park by Vietnam went beyond reversing U.S. policy; it also allowed Park to undermine the opposition to the normalization treaty by portraying the Vietnam venture as a national crusade, thus simultaneously helping to fulfil a longstanding U.S. policy goal for normalization. Ironically, by mid-1965, the United States no longer placed the normalization treaty at the top of its Northeast Asia agenda. The priority had changed to gaining support for its Vietnam policy.

The paradox and the cost

Although the immediate impact of the American escalation in Vietnam was the imposition of constraints on U.S. policies toward Japan and Korea, this is not to state that the ultimate consequences of those constraints were contrary to American policy goals for Northeast Asia. Paradoxically, U.S. concessions and policy reversals resulted in achieving the fulfillment of the objectives long sought by the United States: the creation of a strong and viable bulwark against communist expansion.

If Vietnam had not occurred, could the U.S. have achieved its long-range objectives in Northeast Asia? Probably, but the important historical lesson is that the requirements of the American policy in Vietnam from 1965 accelerated the process.

Of course, this was not achieved without costs. Perhaps the greatest sacrifice made by the United States was in abandoning any commitment the U.S. might have had toward the development of democracy in South Korea. Park's authoritarianism was tacitly tolerated by the United States, a policy momentum maintained even when the U.S. began withdrawing from Vietnam in 1969. From the Korean perspective, Vietnam was ultimately not a positive force for national development. Although James C. Thomson could not have foreseen all the detailed ramifications of the U.S. escalation in Vietnam, he would not have been surprised at the results in Korea.

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